THE XMAS

SIXPENCE

ROYAL

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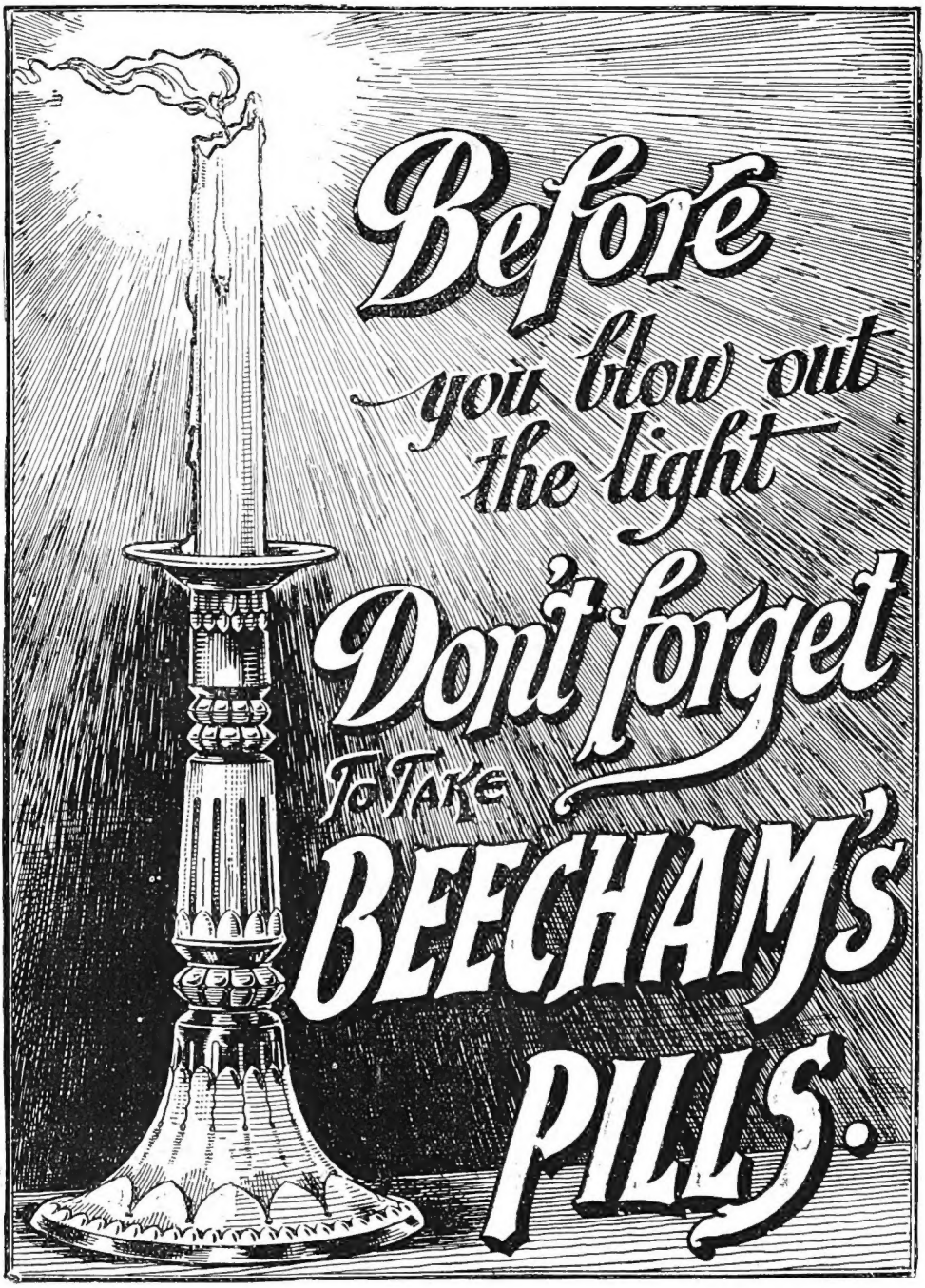

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BECAUSE Beecham's Pills gently calm irritation of the Nervous System, while by their stimulative and cleansing action upon the Liver and Kidneys, Digestion proceeds with normal regularity, so that at night the tranquillised mind and body are prepared for "Nature's sweet restorer"—peaceful slumber. Should one feel restless after an exciting or convivial evening, a dose of BEECHAM'S PILLS will quickly induce refreshing sleep.

***Sold Everywhere in Boxes, price* 1s. 1½d. (*56 pills*), *and* 2s. 9d. (*168 pills*).**

BODLEIAN 22 11 1904

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What Do We Live For, If Not to Make Life Less Difficult For Each Other.—GEORGE ELIOT.

We shut our eyes, the flowers bloom on;
We murmur, but the corn-ears fill;
We choose the shadow, but the sun
That casts it shines behind us still.

And each good thought or action moves the dark world nearer to the sun.—WHITTIER.

Light When Thou Else Wert Blind!

SYMPATHY.—Strength When Life's Surges Rudest Roll.

Millais' Great Xmas Heart!

Millais himself was occasionally induced to repeat the following anecdote, which is said by a personal friend to be new: "I found myself," said the late P.R.A., "seated one evening at a rather grand dinner, next to a very pretty, gushing girl, to whom I had not been introduced. She fired into conversation directly she had finished her soup, and, as it was May, began it with the inevitable question, 'I suppose you've been to the Academy?' I replied that I had. 'And did you notice the Millais'? Didn't you think they were awful daubs? I can't imagine how such things ever get hung—!' She was going on gaily in the same strain, while I sat silent, when suddenly the amused smiles of those around her and the significant hush brought her to a sudden *stop*. She coloured rather painfully, and whispered to me in a frightened voice, 'for Heaven's sake what have I done? Have I said anything dreadful? Do tell me.' 'Not now,' I replied. 'Eat your dinner in peace, and I'll tell you by-and-by. She did so, rather miserably, vainly trying to extract from me at intervals what the matter was, and when the dessert came I filled up her glass with champagne, and told her to gulp it down very *quickly* when I counted three. She obeyed without protest, and I took the opportunity when she *couldn't speak*. I *grasped her hand and said, 'I am Millais, let's be friends.'*"

MORAL.—*Never to blend our Pleasure or our Pride with Sorrow of the Meanest thing that feels.*—WORDSWORTH.

And such is Human Life—So Gliding on; It Glimmers like a Meteor, and is Gone!

WHAT HIGHER AIM CAN MAN ATTAIN THAN CONQUEST OVER HUMAN PAIN?

IMPORTANT TO TRAVELLERS AT HOME AND ABROAD.—Did the world stand still, or did the generation that is to be, benefit very fully by the experience gathered by their predecessors, but little necessity would exist for dwelling upon the special recommendations of ENO'S world-famed 'FRUIT SALT.' *It is not too much to say that its merits have been published, tested, and approved literally from pole to pole, and that its cosmopoliton popularity to-day presents one of the most signal illustrations of commercial enterprise to be found in our trading records.* In view of the constant and steady influx of new buyers into all the markets of the world, it is impossible to rest on laurels, however arduously won or freshly gathered; and for this reason I have pleasure in again, though briefly, directing the attention of readers of this Magazine to the genuine qualities possessed by ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT.' *Residents in fever-haunted regions to be found in some of our colonial possessions, travellers at home and abroad, dwellers in the tropics,* the *bon vivant* no less than the man to whom the recommendation, 'Eat and be merry,' is a sarcasm and a gibe—one and all may, with advantage to themselves, be reminded of a remedy that meets their special requirements with a success approaching the miraculous.

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CAUTION.—Examine the Capsule and see that it is marked ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT,' otherwise you have the sincerest form of flattery—IMITATION.

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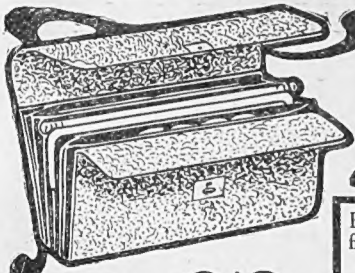

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We refund every penny of the price of this Coat if it does not please.

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Free with every order, a dainty booklet—"Beauty's Boudoir"—giving valuable toilet advice.

Your Chemist or Hairdresser will obtain Peralia or Crimpoline for you, or send direct to—

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If so, we will send you particulars of our Elevators, which will increase your height 1in. to 4½in. (without detection). Prices from **5/6** per pair. Send stamp for further particulars—**PERALIA Co.** (Dept. R), **73 Camden St., North Shields, Eng.**

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If you have an odd-shaped or red nose, send stamp for further particulars of our **10s.** Nose Instruments. **PERALIA CO.** (Dept. R), **73 Camden St., North Shields, England.**

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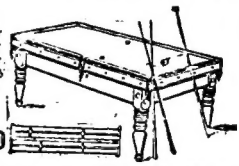

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1 Large Smoked Ox-tongue.
1 Glass Galantine Turkey and Tongue.
1 Glass Oxford Brawn.
1 Tin Pressed Brisket of Beef.
1 Tablet Mulligatawny Soup.
1 Tablet Tomato Soup.
1 Glass Ox-tail Soup.
1 Glass Mock Turtle Soup.
1 Jar Potted Chicken Ham and Tongue.
1 Jar Potted Wild Duck.
1 Tin Victoria Pâté.
2 Jars Jam.
1 Jar Seville Orange Marmalade.
1 Bottle Piccalilli.
1 Bottle Mixed Pickles.
1 Bottle "P & O" Sauce.

Contents of Half-Guinea Hamper:

1 Tin Belgravian Rolled Ox-tongue.
1 Glass Galantine Chicken and Ham.
1 Glass Wild Boar's Head.
1 Jar Potted Wild Duck.
1 Tablet Mulligatawny Soup.
1 Tablet Tomato Soup.
1 Glass Ox-tail Soup.
1 Jar Seville Orange Marmalade.
1 Jar Jam.
1 Bottle "P & O" Sauce.
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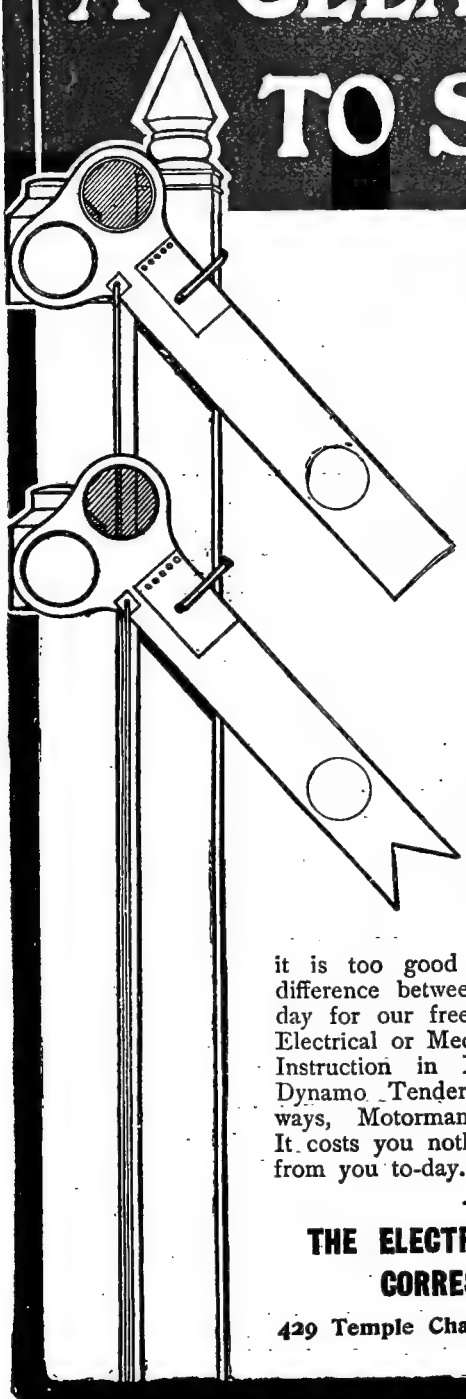

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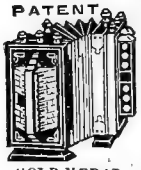

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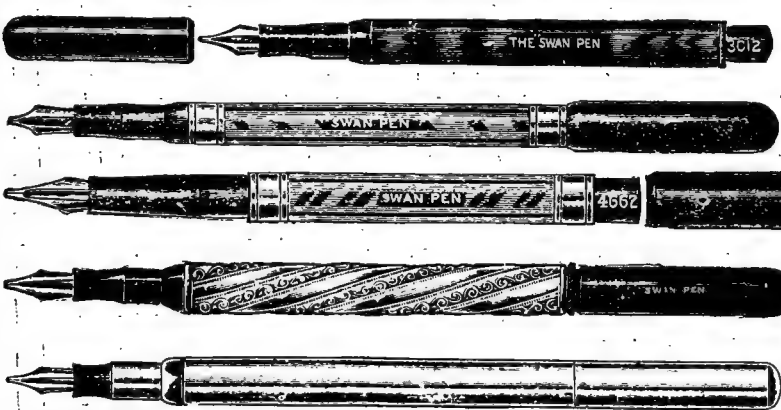

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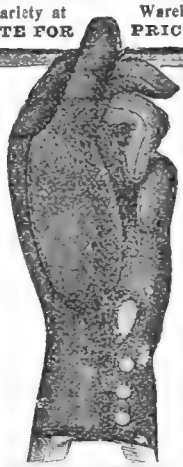

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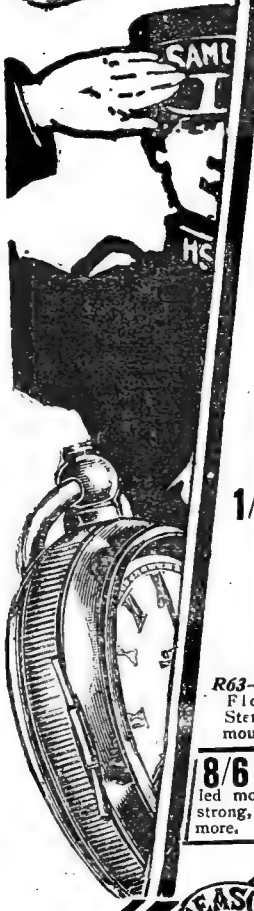

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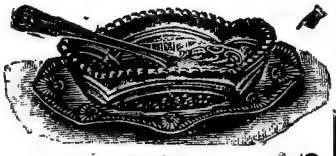

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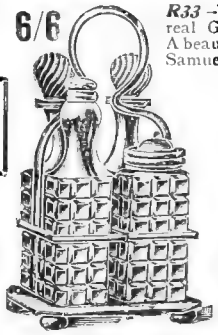

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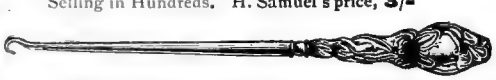

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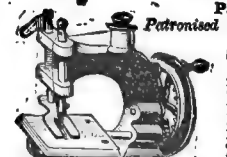

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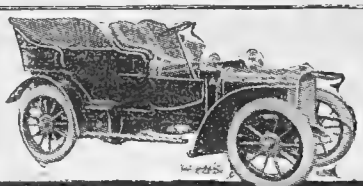

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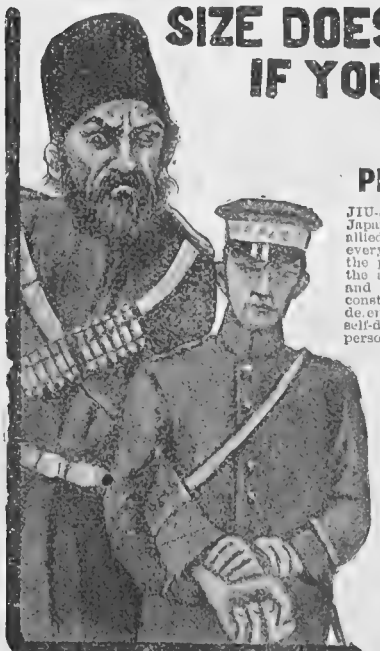

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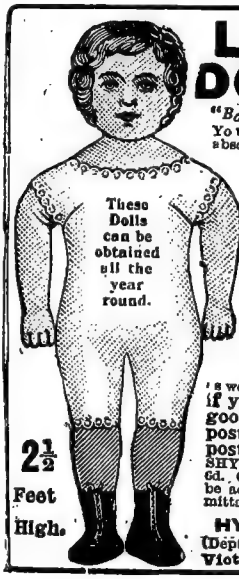

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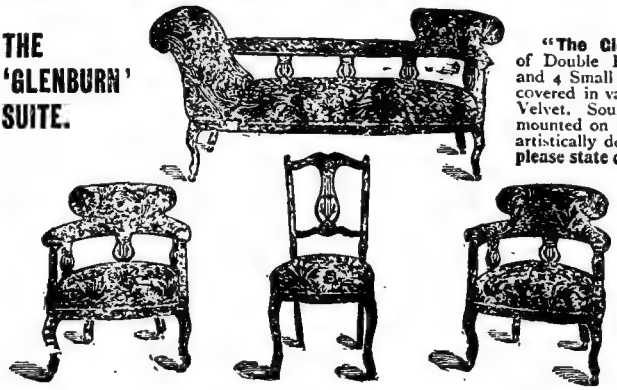

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GRAND XMAS DOUBLE NUMBER

OF THE

Strand Magazine

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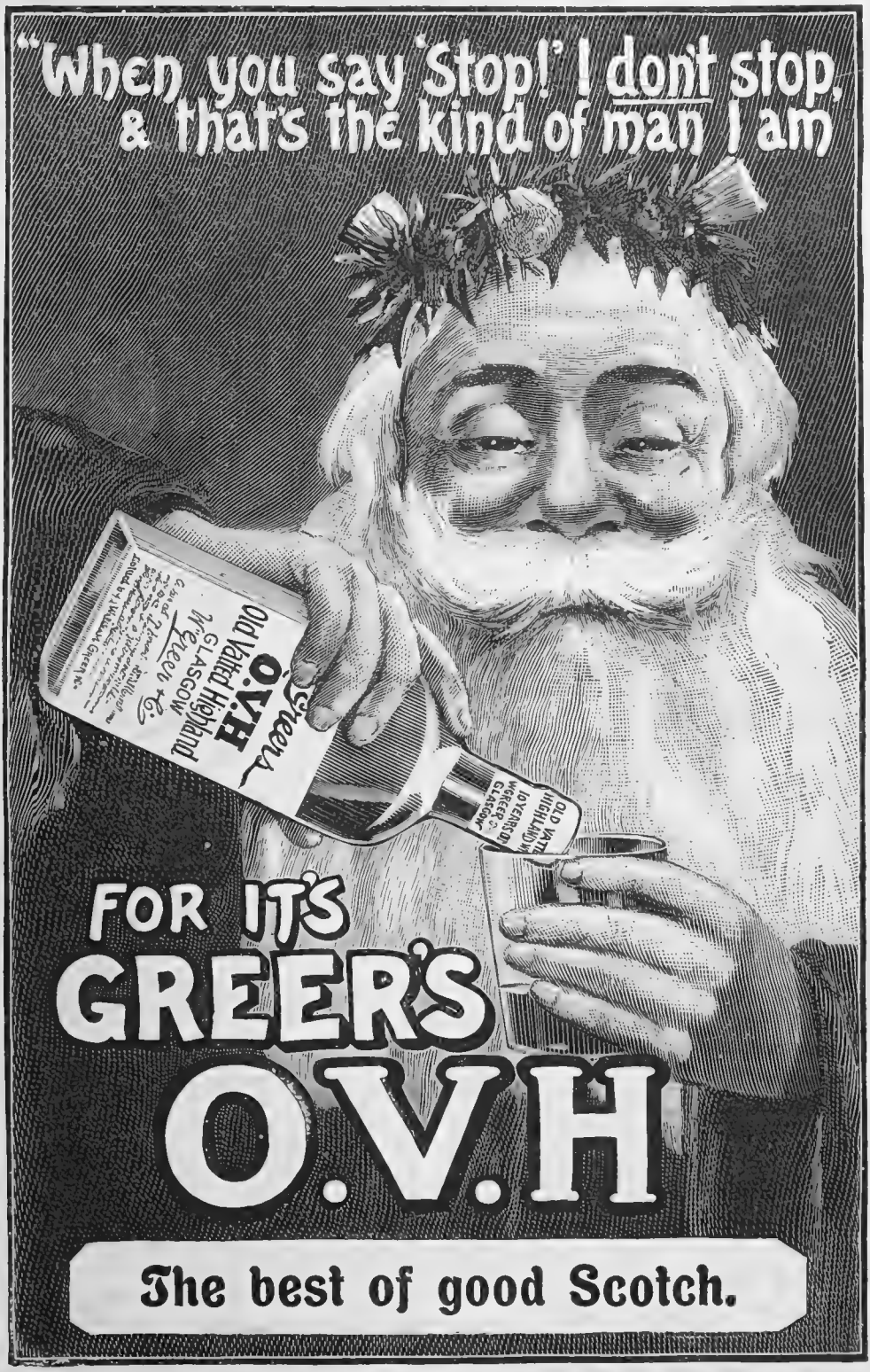
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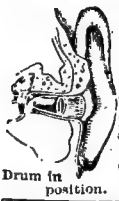

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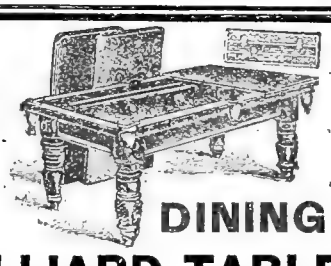

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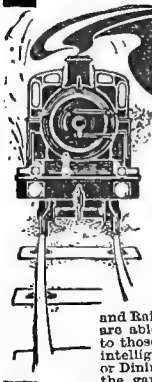

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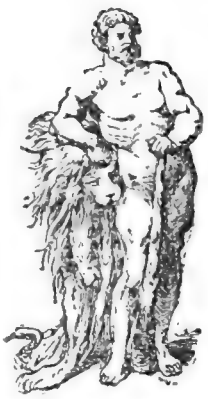

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True and practical economy is saving money on the things you have to buy—not going without the things you need. Our Consumers' Benefit Plan of Advertising enables Quaker Oats' customers to exercise true and practical economy by obtaining from us home and personal necessities and luxuries for a cash outlay of less than their actual value and far below prices usually charged.

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Any of these pieces of silver sent for ONE WHITE SQUARE and the price stated. All the smartness and life-long durability of sterling silver. The designs are most artistic and rich. Each article is covered with a deposit of silver heavier than on the best triple plate. Coffee Spoon, 6d.; Tea Spoon, 8d.; Porridge Spoon, 1s.; Dessert Fork, 1s.; Dessert Knife, 2s.; Table Spoon, 1s. 3d.; Table Fork, 1s. 3d.; Table Knife, 2s.; Fruit Fork, 1s.; Fruit Knife (saw back), 2s.; Pickle Fork, 1s. 4d.; Cold Meat Fork, 2s.; Sugar Spoon (gilt bowl), 1s. 6d.; Baby Spoon, 2s.

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Address.....

Dept. R. M. .....

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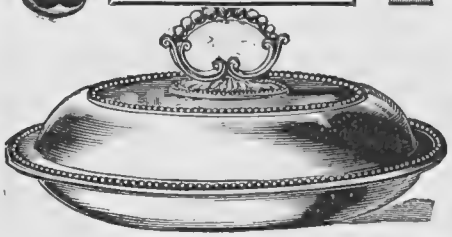

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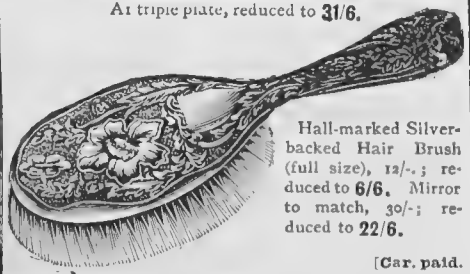

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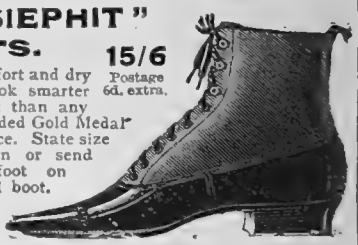

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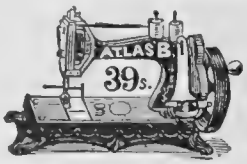

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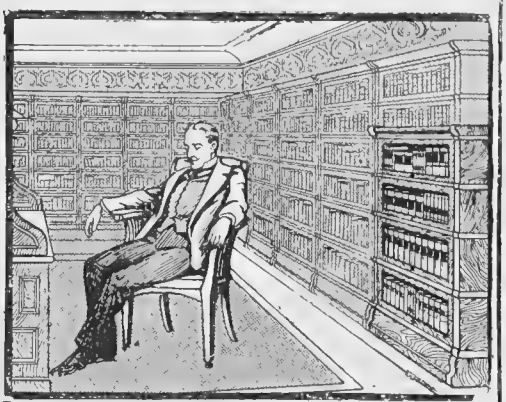

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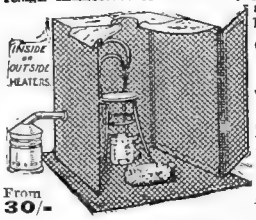

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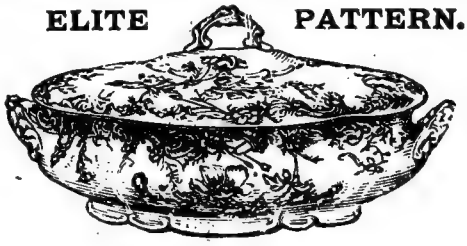

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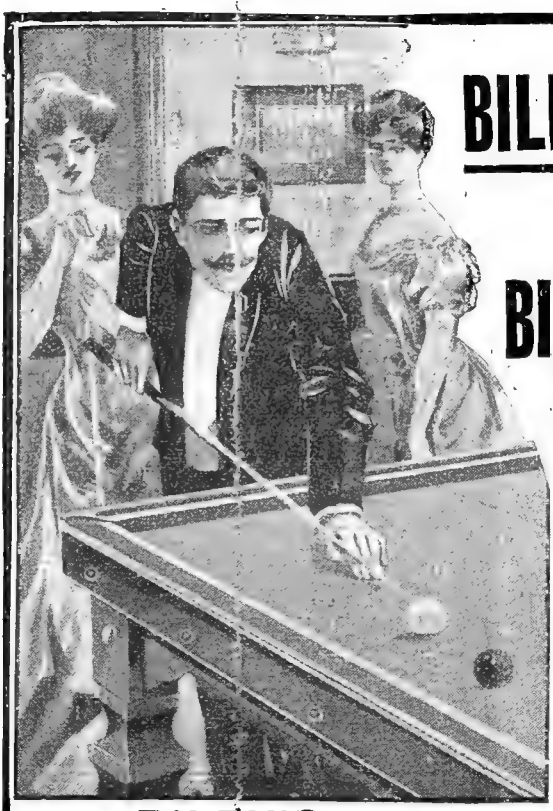

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SPECIAL QUALITY (very superior).		
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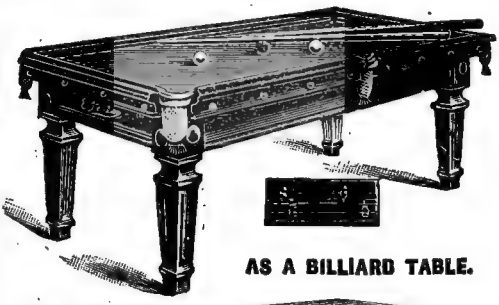

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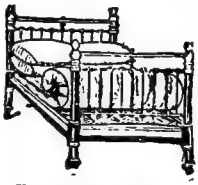

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Life is but an empty dream,
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Those who live on BERMALINE.

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PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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The Editor will always be ready to consider contributions, whether literary or pictorial, and, where stamps are enclosed, will make every endeavour to ensure their safe return in the event of their proving unsuitable, although he cannot hold himself responsible for any MSS. or drawings or photographs sent on approval.

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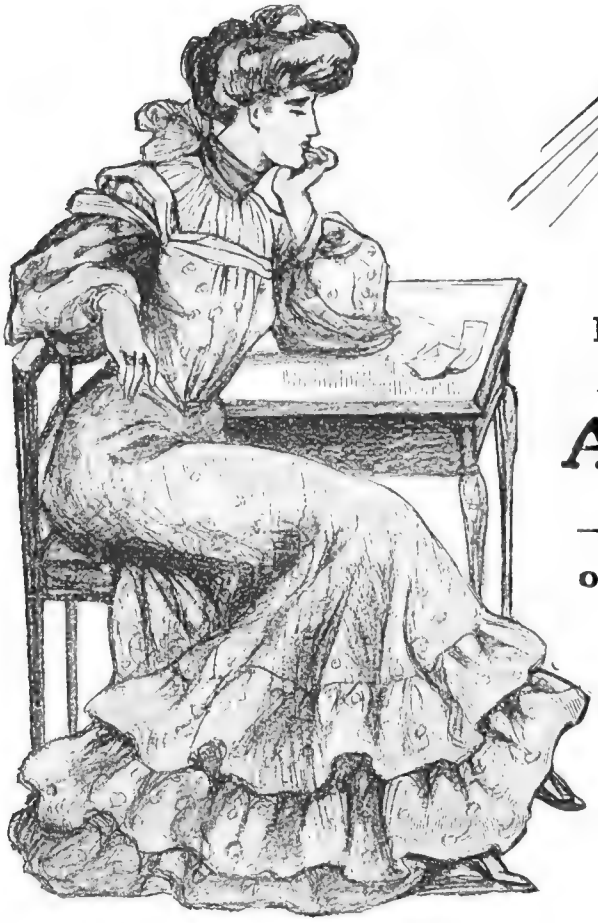

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Photo of Miss Ellaline Terriss, by Ellis & Walery.

The Sweetest Smile in England.

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ENTER PIERROT!

From a painting by F. M. Skipworth.

Google

A ♠

Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

America claims pretty Miss Pauline Chase. She is a delightful dancer, and acknowledges to being superstitious. In America she called herself Polly Chase. Thereby hangs a tale. One day Miss Chase noticed the name "Pretty Polly" amongst the horses entered in a certain race. She backed her namesake and won. Since then she has always "put a little" on "Pretty Polly" and generally won.

♠ A

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

"I have been in every part of the world," says Mrs. Brown-Potter, one of the most beautiful women on the stage. "To begin with I was born in the States. My earliest memory is of a very dramatic incident. A little pet lamb of mine fell into a stream. It was sinking, and I jumped in and seized hold of it. Then I began to sink, but I clung on to the lamb. And when I was pulled out, quite unconscious, the lamb gambolled off into the meadows."

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Miss Sybil Arundel, who smiles through the diamond above, is now the leading lady in the "Cingalee" at Daly's Theatre. She is a great talker, and professes a passion for gardening.

◇ ◇

Below appears Miss Hilda Anthony, a pretty little lady of eighteen. She has been on the stage only three years, and hails from Santiago.

Photos *Foulsham & Banfield.*

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Photo *Foulsham & Banfield.*

A little over four years ago Miss Muriel Beaumont made her début at the Haymarket. Then, of course, she took a minor part. Still, it was a beginning. After this she graduated into taking a part in "Frocks and Frills," a play that delighted the ladies of the audience on account of the charming costumes that were worn on the stage. Following this, Miss Beaumont appeared in the "Admirable Crichton." There she met Mr. Gerald Du Maurier, whom she eventually married.

Photo *Ellis & Walery.*

The sudden illness of Miss Reeve, who should have taken the part of "Ada" in the "Three Little Maids" at the Apollo Theatre, gave Miss Madge Crichton, whose photograph heads this page, her opportunity. As "Ada" she caused quite a sensation, and ever since has delighted audiences in London, America, and Australia.

♡ ♡

Pretty Miss Adrienne Augarde smiles daintily at us from the heart below. When quite a beginner on the stage, she was lying asleep in a hammock, surrounded by fairies. Suddenly she lost her balance, and—plump!—she tumbled on the stage.

Photo *Lallie Charles*

Google

A ♣

Photo *Johnston & Hoffmann*

Miss Maud Fealy, who is Sir Henry Irving's "leading lady," first came into fame as the heroine of "Sherlock Holmes." She was then the youngest "leading lady" in the world. Lately there has been quite a Fealy mania in America, where, people talk of her as the most beautiful woman on earth.

♣ A

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2 ♣

Although quite young Miss Nina Sevening, whose likeness heads this page, has already been on the stage many years. Her first manager was Sir Augustus Harris, and so charmed was he with Miss Sevening's clever acting that he immediately offered her seven pounds a week to begin with.

✣ ✣

Miss Marie Studholme, who smiles at us from the club below, is devoted to animals. Her little menagerie at home has a parrot that is notorious for its wickedness. But, of course, it is always polite, and *never* uses a naughty word.

Photos *Foulsham & Banfield.*

♣ 2

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2 ♠

Mr. Lionel Brough, who a short while ago
celebrated his
jubilee of stage life, has played
in every leading
theatre in the United Kingdom, America, and
South Africa.

♠ ♠

To take the place of George Grossmith
is no small thing.
Walter Passmore stepped into his shoes
at the Savoy, and uncommonly
well he did it. He is
the husband of pretty Miss Agnes Fraser.

Photos *Foulsham & Banfield.*

2 ♠

AN OGRE'S TENANTS.

A Christmas Story for Children

By Owen Oliver.

Bob and Babs knew their new address themselves, because mother had made them say it over and over; but they did not know if Santa Claus knew. They hoped that he had seen them moving, and had moved in the same direction; but there seemed to be something strange about him this year.

Mother shook her head whenever they talked about him; and Sissy, who was grown up, was afraid he had gone right away.

"You must not expect too much, dears," she warned them, "because he has lost a lot of money. . . . No-o. I don't know where to write to him. He was a friend of father's, you see, and father used to meet him in the City."

"Yes," said Bob, "and he used to ask father if we'd been good; and father used to say we'd been 'pretty fair lately'; and then he used to say he'd see what he could do."

"Farver knewed what toys wouldn't go down the chimbley," Babs added. "So we didn't want zem. Farver knewed more zan anybody, didn't he? More zan muvver an' you!"

"Yes, dear," Sissy agreed. "Mother and I miss father, too. He knew a great deal that we don't know, and did a great deal that we can't do."

"He knew where Santa Claus lived," Bob stated. "He'd make him come if he were home."

"Yes, dear," Sissy agreed. "I expect he would. Perhaps he will be able to write from South Africa and tell him to come; but I don't know—I really don't know."

They would have written to father about it, only there wasn't time to get an answer, because South Africa is a very long way off; and Sissy said he had enough to think about already, because trade was worse than ever. They did not know who "Ever" was, but they knew that "Trade" was always bad, and father had gone abroad to try and make him be better.

As they could not consult father, they consulted Willie Bell, who always had a lot of things from Santa Claus. Willie said that his father said that Santa Claus lived in their road, and listened at the top of the chimney to hear what children asked for;

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and once when he called up it he heard a squeaky voice answer, and so did his father, who was in the room.

They called up their chimney ever so many times, but Santa Claus never answered *them*. Bob put his head through the hole to look for him, but a lot of soot fell down and made him in a dreadful mess; and mother said it was nearly a new suit, and he really was old enough to know better, and Santa Claus would have been very cross with him if he *had* looked down, and it was all nonsense about his listening at chimneys, because no one could tell whose chimney was whose.

So they did not believe Willie Bell any more, and they asked Maggie Johnson instead. The Christmas before he had brought her a doll's house, although she had moved. So he must have some way of finding out such things.

Maggie said that *her* father said that Santa Claus lived in Germany, and brought all the toys from there in a flying chariot; and anyone could see *that* was right, because "Made in Germany" was printed on the back of the doll's house, and on the lid of the box of bricks, when it had a lid. And before Christmas, Maggie Johnson's father said, Santa Claus came and peeped in at the windows to take particular notice if children were good enough to have toys.

So Bob and Babs stood at the nursery window whenever they had clean overalls on, to let Santa Claus see what a good little boy and girl they were, when they were good. When they were not very good they kept away from the window. When they were doing things that Santa Claus was sure not to like they pulled down the blinds. When they were going to make a dreadful noise, they hung the counterpane from the mantelpiece, so that the noise should not go up the chimney, in case Willie Bell's father might be right, after all.

The second time they hung the counterpane up it caught alight, and mother said she could not make out what had come to them lately, and she should be obliged to punish them severely if they ever did such a naughty thing again; and she was afraid that Santa Claus would have to bring a counterpane, instead of toys.

"He has such a lot of things to buy," she said, with a sigh; "and he hasn't nearly so much money as he used to have, before your father went away. Really, I don't know how he can afford it. Well, well, dears, you needn't cry. I daresay, if you are very good, he will manage to bring you some little thing each."

Bob and Babs explained to mother that they wanted a lot of things each, and they preferred them big; and would she be sure and tell Santa Claus. But she said it was no use, for she was sure he couldn't afford it. Sissy told them that they must not ask mother for things, because she was dreadfully worried about the rent and other matters. They knew that the "rent" was the hole in the counterpane, but they did not understand what "other matters" meant.

So they thought it was something very dreadful, and they decided not to bother mother any more about Santa Claus, but to look for him themselves, and tell him how good they were, and what toys they wanted. Bob borrowed two sheets of Sissy's notepaper, and wrote a list in printing-writing. He meant to give it to Santa Claus to keep, as Babs and he could remember.

They went to look for Santa Claus the next day, but no one seemed able to direct them, and they got lost. Bob was very tired, and Babs cried; and at last a policeman took them home. He was a very friendly policeman, and he said that Santa Claus lived in their own road, and quite near their own house; and, if he were they, he would look for him out of the nursery window.

They had very bad colds afterwards, and were kept in the nursery for a couple of days. So they thought themselves that this was the best place. They would be sure to recognise Santa Claus from the pictures, and Bob could slip out, if mother and Sissy were not watching, and run after him and give him the list, and tell him that if he thought of anything that they had not put down he could bring that too.

They did not see anyone like Santa Claus all the morning; but in the afternoon a white-haired old gentleman stared at their house, and then came up the steps. They ran down to the dining-room to see if he was Santa Claus; but mother was quite angry, and sent them out. Sissy told them that he was not Santa Claus, but an ogre, and he had come about the rent; and she called him a hard-hearted, grasping old Jew! He was one of those wicked people, she added, who took poor Santa Claus' money, so that he couldn't give little boys and girls what he would like to.

So after that they ran away from the window whenever he passed. Bob made up his mind to get a real sword, and cut off his head, just when he was going to put Babs in

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the oven, like ogres did; and Babs woke up in the night and screamed about the oven; and Sissy said that Bob was a naughty boy to frighten his little sister, and if the ogre came he would eat *him*. Then Bob cried, too, and Sissy gave them two sweets each, and said, she wouldn't let the ogre touch either of them and stayed till they went to sleep.

From that time they only peeped round the curtains, because the ogre passed very often. One day they saw the ogre talking to a white-haired gentleman, who lived nearly opposite, and the ogre wagged his finger at

He was a very friendly policeman.

him, and held his sleeve. So they thought that *he* must be Santa Claus, and the ogre was trying to get his money that he wanted for toys. They asked Sissy if the other gentleman was Santa Claus, and she said perhaps he might be; but they must not ask him, or he would be very cross with them, and then they would get nothing.

The ogre was very stern-looking, and he talked to himself sometimes as he walked along, so they were *quite* sure that he was an ogre. He called again the morning before Christmas Eve. Mother had a bad headache, and lay down all the afternoon. Sissy said he was a Jew, and Christmas had no meaning to him, and he wanted all the money that Santa Claus had, and more, for rent, and she was afraid there wouldn't be any left for toys. They said that she and mother could buy them some instead; but she declared that he wanted her money and mother's too, and he was going to call again the next morning. *She* should see him this time, she said, instead of mother.

He did call the next morning, but Sissy did not see him, because she had gone out with some paintings. She painted flowers and birds and butterflies, and sometimes they bought them at a shop; but this morning they did not buy any. Mother was not quite dressed, so the ogre had to wait in the dining-room.

There was no fire in the nursery because coals had gone up, so Bob and Babs were playing downstairs, and he talked to them. He did not say "fe-fi-fo-fum," as they expected, but talked like a nice old gentleman. When they found that he was not a savage ogre, they talked to him too. He asked their

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names, and told them his. It was Isaac Jacobs, and he said he was not a real ogre, only a landlord; and he had often noticed them at the window, and once *he* had a little boy and girl.

Bob asked him what he had done with them. (They thought, perhaps, he had eaten them, because ogres do.) He said they were with Father Abraham now. They thought that Mr. Abraham was another ogre, and very likely their grandfather.

Bob wondered if ogres liked their own little ogre-boys and ogre-girls; but he knew that it was rude to ask too many questions. So he whispered to Babs to ask, because she was only a girl, and not old enough to know any better; and she said, "Bob finks you liked your lickle boy an' dirl, didn't you?"

The ogre said he liked them very much, and, for their sakes, he liked all little boys and little girls.

"Bob 'spects you mean if they'se dood?" Babs suggested.

"Yes," he agreed, "that is what I mean, of course."

"Was your lickle boy an' dirl dood?"

"She means 'were,'" Bob apologised. "She's only six."

"Yes." The ogre sighed. "I thought them good."

"Did Santa Claus come to them?" Bob inquired.

"No-o. We don't have Christmas, or Santa Claus, among my people; but they had presents. Oh, yes. They had a lot of presents."

"We used to," Bob explained, "before father went away; but we don't now. Sissy doesn't think Santa Claus is coming this year, because you—I mean an ogre—is going to take all his money; but I don't think an ogre would—not a *nice* ogre, who liked little boys and babies."

"I isn't a baby," Babs corrected. "I'se a dirl."

"No-o," said the ogre. "I don't think he would."

"He'd be a wicked ogre if he took Santa Claus's money, wouldn't he?"

The ogre smiled a little, and stroked his long beard.

"Unless it was owing to him," he said. "Do you know what 'owing' means?"

"No," said Bob.

"Well, suppose you went to a shop, and asked for a pennyworth of sweets, and said you'd bring the penny to-morrow. What would happen then?"

"They wouldn't give me the sweets!" said Bob promptly.

"But suppose they did?"

"I should eat them!"

"G'eedy pig," Babs cried indignantly. "I want some." She caught hold of Bob and tried to fish in his pockets.

"I haven't any, silly," he told her. "It was only pretend about the penny. Did you give your little boy and girl pennies?"

The ogre said that he did sometimes, and they used to run out directly and buy sweets; and Bob and Babs said that was what they should do, if they had a penny; and he gave them a penny each, and they went out before mother came in.

So they did not hear what the ogre said to her; but they heard her tell Sissy he had given her a week's grace. Sissy told them they must not call him an ogre again if they spoke to him, because it might hurt his feelings. They were surprised that ogres had feelings; but they expected he was different from other ogres, because he had a little boy and girl of his own, and he liked them.

"I'm *sure* he won't take Santa Claus's money," Bob told Babs; "but I don't believe Santa Claus knows we live here. Let's write something and put it up in the window."

So they got the ink, and a big piece of paper, and wrote it between them in printing letters as big as Bob's hand. It looked very nice, except for the smudges, and this is what it said:

"To Santer Claw.
We Liv Hear.
Doo Cum. Doo."

Several people glanced at the notice and smiled; but the gentleman they called Santa Claus was looking the other way, and the only one who really stopped to read it was the ogre.

He put his spectacles straight, and took them off and wiped them, and put them straight again. Then he said "Umph!"

They heard him because they had the window open a little way to listen. They were rather worried, because they did not know what "Umph!" meant in ogre language; but they hoped it meant that he wouldn't take the money that Santa Claus owed him for sweets.

Mother and Sissy did not find the notice all the afternoon; but after Bob and Babs had been put to bed they drew up the blind and

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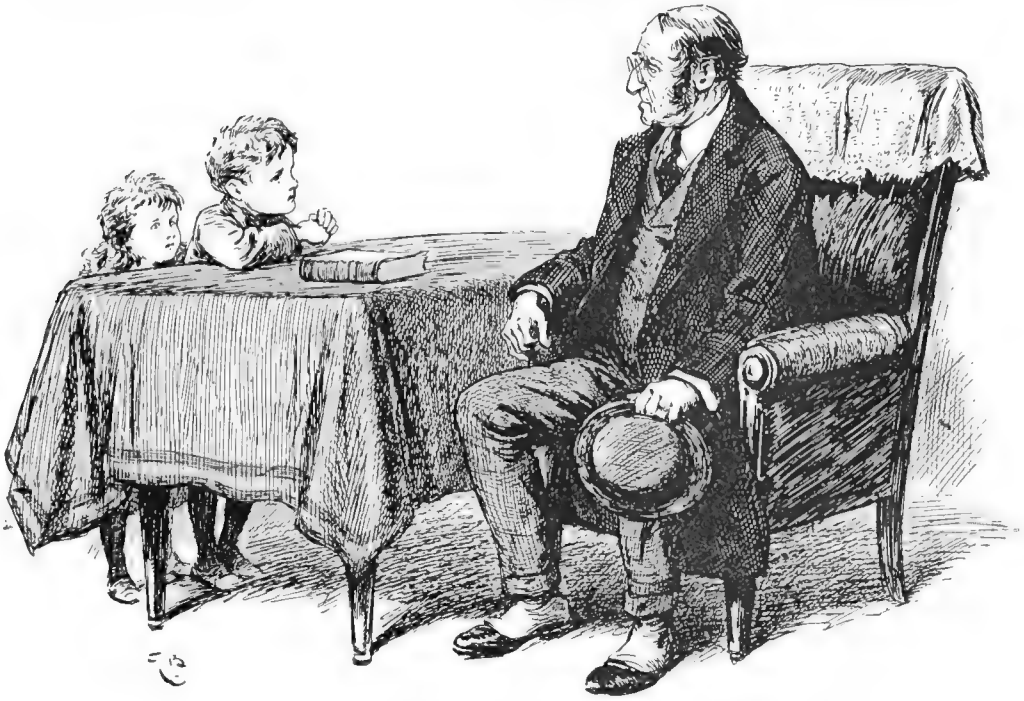
put a candle to show the notice; and Sissy came up for something, and found it and took it away.

"You mustn't put things in the window," she said. "But I expect Santa Claus has seen it, and I am sure he will bring you something; but I am afraid it won't be very much this year, dears, because he is so poor. A gun and a sword you particularly wanted, didn't you, Bob? And you wanted a doll, didn't you, Babs? What have I been crying about? I was putting up a few pieces of holly, and one prickly piece hurt me rather —good-night, dears."



"Did Santa Claus come to them?" Bob inquired.

It was the piece that Sissy had put over father's portrait that had hurt her; but she did not tell them that, and she did not tell mother about either the holly or the notice, for fear it should upset her.

"We must get the chicks as much as we can, mother," she said. "I've three-and-six that I was saving for—something that doesn't matter. With that and the two shillings I gave you before, and the half-crown you thought you could spare, we can get them quite a lot of things."

Mother sighed. "There are so many things that they need more than toys. But, of course, they're young. I don't like your going without the collarette you were saving up for, dear."

Sissy said that while she had a good plain dress, she did not care for finery. That was not quite true; but it was one of the stories that are not really stories; and they could manage very well, now they hadn't to pay the rent till next week, and perhaps the ogre would give them a little longer then. Mother said she was sure he wouldn't do that; but, anyhow, Sissy could go and buy the toys for the children.

Sissy had just put on her hat, when there was a knock at the front door, and when she opened it the parcel man handed in six great packages. Three were addressed to Bob, and three to Babs, and there was a label on each that said, "From Santa Claus." Just as she had signed the receipt, the postman came up the steps with a letter for mother. There was money in it—a lot of money, and that was from Santa Claus too. Sissy was so pleased that she caught hold of mother and danced her all round the room; and mother smiled ever so many times while she was getting her breath.

They put the toys in the stockings and round the stockings, and they stretched nearly across to the wall. There was a gun,

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and a sword and pistol, and leaden soldiers, and a fort, and a trumpet, and a train, and a ball for Bob; there was a doll, and a doll's house, and a doll's cradle, and a tea-set, and a Noah's ark, and a picture-book for Babs.

When they had arranged them they arranged them again; and when they had put out the light they lit it again to have another look at them, and then they went down to the dining-room and looked at father's portrait. They always did that when they were very sorry or very glad.

Bob and Babs were so pleased with all the toys Santa Claus had brought, that they forgot all about Santa Claus; but mother and Sissy thought about him a great deal, and studied the writing on the envelope and the labels. There was a peculiarly twirly "t" in Santa that they were sure they had seen before; but they could not remember who wrote so.

Mother said that she did not like using the money till she knew who sent it; but Sissy said that whoever sent it was so nice and kind that she did not mind being indebted to him; and she should go and pay the "horrid old ogre" that very afternoon, for he was a Jew, and Christmas Day was nothing to him.

She had made up her mind to be politely unpleasant to the ogre; but he looked very old and lonely; and he had the photographs of two children on the table; and while he was speaking to her he glanced at them and sighed. So she was not unpleasant at all.

He was not unpleasant either, and said there was no great hurry for a few days, if it were not convenient to them to pay then; but Sissy said it was *quite* convenient. So he began to write out a receipt. He had written "Received with," and begun the "thanks," when Sissy gave quite a scream.

"Oh!" she cried, "the twirly 't.' It was *you!*"

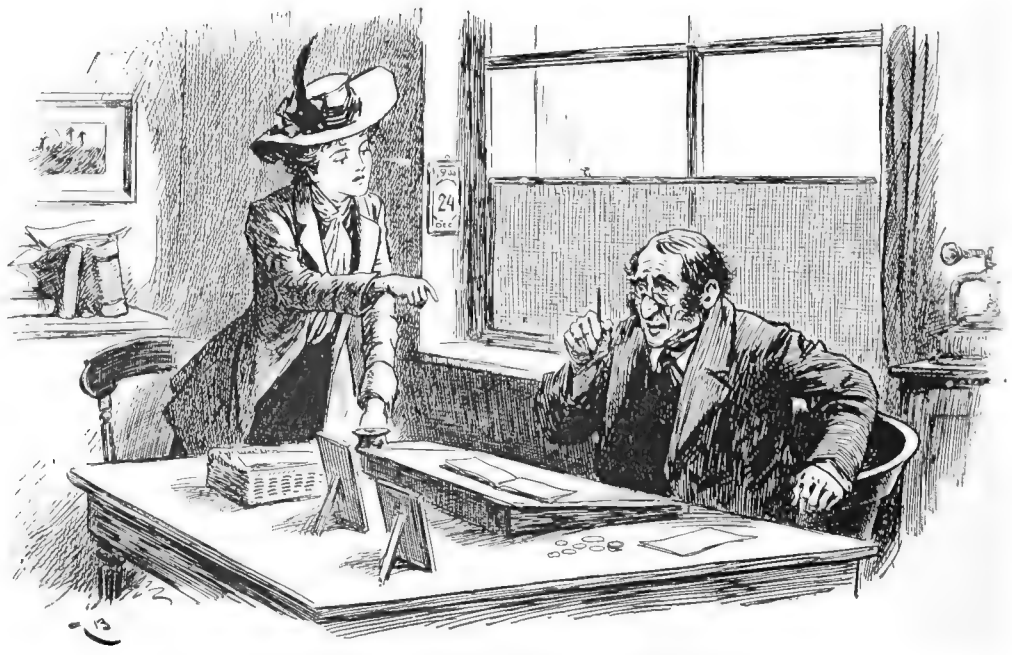
We will leave out what they said after that, because most of it was about the children that he used to have and hadn't, and it made Sissy wipe her eyes; and this is Christmas-time, and it is no use making people feel miserable.

But afterwards he walked home with Sissy, and she took his arm; and when they went into the dining-room mother was so startled that she dropped the shovelful of chestnuts she had been roasting for the children, and Bob and Babs gave a shout.

"The ogre!" they cried. "The ogre!"

"No," said Sissy. "He has a new name. It's—Santa Claus!"

But an ogre he was, and an ogre he had to be; and that was what they always called him. Only they meant the good sort of ogre—the sort that likes little boys and girls.



"Oh!" she cried, "the twirly 't.' It was *you!*"

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THE LITTLE FATHER

A Description, Drawn from Special Information, of the Tsar and His Surroundings—

—His Daily Life, His Many Cares and Responsibilities and His Few Pleasures.

Photo *Levitsky.*

By R. W. Besier.

St. Petersburg: midwinter: under the brilliant starlight the air is like yielding ice: under your feet the frozen snow squeaks and crunches. Most of the people are snug and warm in their comfortable houses. But several splendidly equipped sledges are flying along the deserted streets in the direction of Peterhof. For to-night the Tsar holds an important reception.

Let us follow one of these sledges. It sweeps into the broad courtyard and draws up at the chief entrance. Cossacks stand to the right, Cossacks to the left: vast figures made vaster and more imposing, by reason of the mighty fur coats with which they are covered—not dressed but covered, for the fur hides all of them except the eyes, which peer sternly at you under shaggy, frosted eyebrows. The great doors fly open: the guests, also fur-covered, leave the sledge.

A soft flare of exquisitely tinted electric lights meets them on the threshold. They enter, and escorted by gorgeously apparelled flunkies, proceed along magnificent passages to one of the ante-chambers. Out of their fur coverings, our guests emerge, like splendid butterflies, glittering with jewels and starred with orders.

They are led up an incredibly broad and splendid staircase, to the grand reception room. Long before they have reached the door, the subdued sound of music meets their ears and a low hum of many voices. The sounds grow louder, they hear their names shouted, they enter.

And what a scene meets their eyes!

Covering the floor, which is composed of the most costly mosaic, of the largest and loftiest room in the world, is a throng of people such as no country but Holy Russia could produce: a meeting of civilisation and barbarism, an orgy of colour, a dazzle of jewels, a babel of languages. Yonder, not far from the throne, you may perceive the famous Princess Z——, surrounded by a little crowd of glittering satellites. On her head and neck and on the buckles of her shoes, she carries a hundred thousand pounds' worth of jewels. Her fan itself is worth a small fortune. She is fabulously rich and a widow.

And the man she is speaking to—look at him a moment. There is very little European in that face, with its slit eyes, high cheek-bone, and dry, parchment-coloured skin. A Tartar with a Tartar's record—for he carries one of those orders on his breast, for stamping out a rebellion somewhere in the depths of Asia—killing man, woman, and child within an area of two or three hundred miles. The order, you will notice, is composed of blood-red gems.

These are but two of many hundreds which move across the floor of the reception-room—ambassadors and generals, *attachés* and princes, grand-dukes, governors, statesmen, and the most beautiful and brilliant women in the world—all waiting in subdued excitement for the appearance of the man whose command has brought them here to-night—their Imperial host, Nicholas Alexandrovitch Romanoff, the Autocrat of All the Russias, the Great White Tsar, the "Little Father" of his people.

The supreme moment arrives. Great doors are flung apart, ushers and chamberlains enter, a name is shouted that sets the crowd swaying and whispering like a bed of flowers in the wind.

Everybody stands, as it were, at attention; all eyes are fixed in one direction, and then, almost simultaneously, generals, archdukes, princes, ambassadors, and the rest of that

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wonderful throng bow their heads. For standing on the threshold is a little blonde man, in a sober uniform emblazoned with a few orders, baggy trousers, and high patent leather boots.

He inclines his head slightly, and as he enters into the glare of the lights, you see that his delicate face is very pale and melancholy, and without the semblance of even an artificial smile. His steps seem to hesitate, his eyes glance furtively about him, he raises his hand and pulls nervously at his moustache.

On his left is the beautiful Tsarina, tall and white like a statue. She smiles sadly and bows to left and right. She is perfectly self-possessed, a contrast to her husband, whom she overtops by several inches. His every movement betokens nervousness and discomfort; indeed, it is hard to believe that he was born in the purple and is the direct descendant of a line of emperors whose pride and power have never been matched since the days of the Cæsars. You might imagine that he had been suddenly thrust into a position he has neither the will, the capacity, nor the training to sustain. He looks supremely miserable, and, of a truth, his looks do not belie him.

For the Tsar Nicholas is a man who was never meant to occupy a throne—least of all, the terrible throne of Russia.

Born in another sphere, he would, in all probability, have become the valued member of society given over to the cultivation of mildly intellectual pursuits—literature, art, music—and I think all who have known him and studied his character will agree that his chief hobby would have been a harmless kind of Christian socialism. And this man is the Autocrat of all the Russias—a position whose sleepless dangers and appalling responsibilities broke the heart of his iron father and drove several of his ancestors out of their minds! Is it to be wondered that he should have described himself as in the following verses, of which I give an almost literal translation—for, in addition to his well-known talents as a composer, he has a very pretty gift of rhyming:—

My happiness was born at night,
And suckled in the gloom;
My pleasures have dissolved in flight,
Heart-stricken at my doom.

My soul strives blindly for relief,
Chilled, as by driving snow,
By doubts which scoff at the belief
Of finding peace below.

The simplicity and mildness of his character is exemplified by the following event, which happened a few months ago in St. Petersburg:—

A certain lieutenant who was in a perpetual state of impecuniosity was one day seen riding in a tram. The other officers of the regiment were furious at what they called an insult to the uniform, and intimated to the culprit that he had the option of either sending in his papers or being cashiered, and the unlucky subaltern chose the former alternative.

Before he had time to do so however, the Tsar heard of the affair, and, without a moment's delay, donned his Colonel's uniform of the regiment in question, and, sauntering out of his palace, hailed a tram, and, entering it, sat calmly down till it stopped in front of the barracks. He desired the officers to be called, and, when they were assembled, addressed them thus:

"Gentlemen, I have just ridden from the palace in a tram, and I wish to know if you desire me to send in my papers. I presume I have disgraced my uniform."

"Sire," replied the Major nervously, "Your Majesty could never do that."

"Then," replied the Tsar with an amused smile, "as I have not degraded the uniform, Lieutenant D—— cannot have done so, and will thus retain his commission in this regiment, even if he, as I do, dares to ride in a tram."

The Tsar is not only the most powerful, he is the richest man in the world. In addition to his almost incalculable private fortune, he receives from the Russian Government a grant of a million pounds *per annum*. This sum is paid him in monthly instalments, a cheque on the National Bank of Russia being dispatched by a special messenger from the Treasury.

I believe it is an open secret that King Edward's total income is only just sufficient to enable him to meet the large expenses which are the necessary outcome of his position. His fortune and "salary" is not a quarter of the Tsar's; and yet the Tsar is forced to spend nearly all the money he receives from private and public sources. He is the possessor of over a hundred palaces and castles, which have to be kept up in lavish style by an army of close on 30,000 servants, whose wages altogether amount to £1,000,000 a year.

His stables alone must cost him a fortune. His private stud consists of over 5000 horses. It has been calculated that all in all he spends close on £5,000,000 a year.

And little enough pleasure he gets out of all his wealth! His life is about the least

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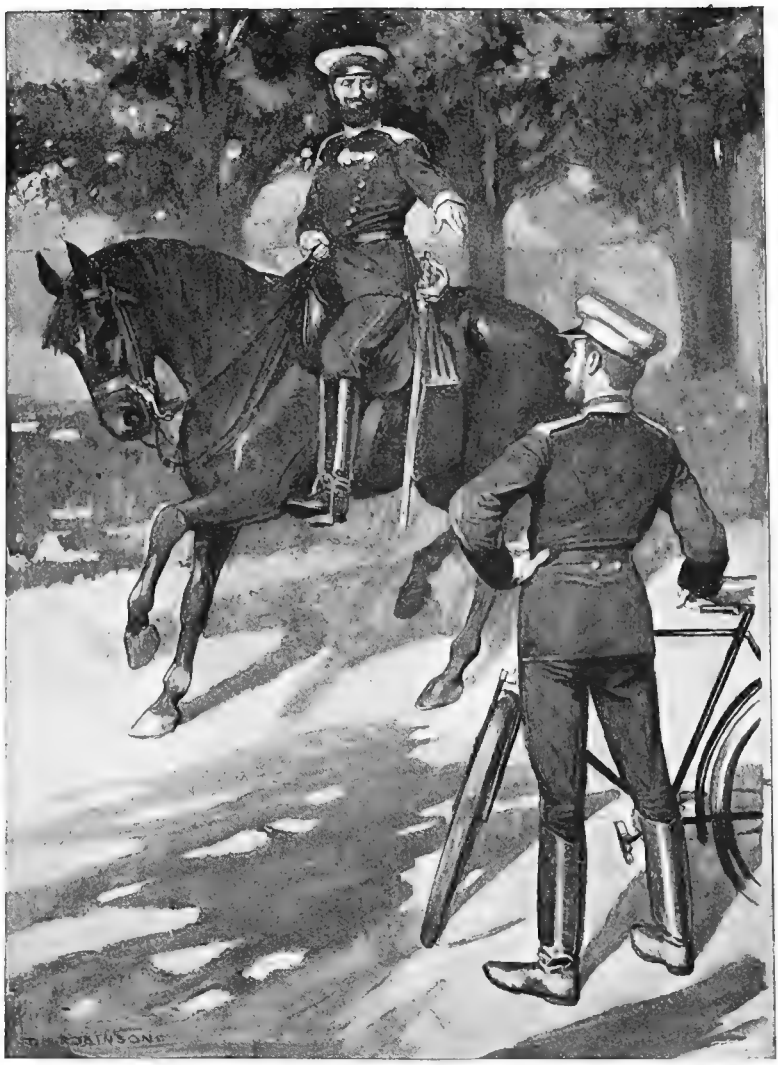
delightful possible to imagine. It is composed mainly of what seems to be a profitless routine of heavy drudgery, which must grow intensely wearisome year in, year out.

Like his energetic brother monarch of Germany, the Tsar gets up every morning, all the year round, at six o'clock. You must not imagine that he performs this heroic deed because he enjoys the distinction of turning out of his warm bed when most of his subjects are enjoying the sleep of the just. He is precisely the sort of man who would dearly enjoy such little relaxation as a comfortable snooze on a frosty morning. But, above all, he is rigidly conscientious. His work is there, his work has to be done, and to do his work he must have more hours at his disposal than the average man. So he is out of bed at six and into a cold bath, and into his clothes, and at the breakfast-table punctually at half-past six.



There is an amusing story (see page 118) of how the Tsar was mistaken by a general for a minor officer, and severely rated for not saluting.

The cold bath, by the way, is one of the Tsar's many concessions to English custom. It is a remarkable trait in his character, and like many others, rather unfortunate, considering his peculiar position, that he should be such an enthusiastic lover of England and the English.

In the bosom of his family English and no other language is spoken; he has decided to educate his children according to English ideas—before they know a word of Russian or French, they can prattle fluently in English. When out of uniform he dresses in tweeds of English material and English cut; and even the food he eats is English food prepared in English fashion.

"If only I were not the Tsar," he once remarked, "I would buy an English country house and never live anywhere but in England."

All this is very strange when we remember that Nicholas is the ruler of a country which is generally supposed to be the hereditary enemy of England.

The Tsar's subjects, who are certainly not particularly enthusiastic over these Anglophile predilections, put the blame for them, with much else which they do not like in their

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Monarch, on to the shoulders of his beautiful wife. And in this instance no doubt with justice, for Alexandra Feodorovna is English to the backbone, and her influence over her husband, always considerable, has of late given much uneasiness to his Ministers, especially after the birth of her son, an event which has made her power tenfold stronger in the country.

Breakfast, then, is quite *à l'Anglais*, at the Peterhof, at Livadia, or wherever the Tsar may be living. The average middle-class Englishman enjoys a similar repast most days of his life—eggs and bacon, bread and butter, with marmalade specially prepared by an English firm, and tea or coffee.

Immediately after breakfast the Tsar makes a bee line for his cigar box. King Edward is known to be a heavy smoker, but the Tsar beats him hands down in this particular indulgence. His especial vice is an overpowering brand of black Havana cigars. These he consumes continuously, from morning to bedtime. If his physician protested once against this custom he protested a dozen times, and very properly, for Nicholas is certainly not a strong man; but, at last, he was compelled to hold his peace when the Tsar turned on him with the pettish exclamation: "Do you want to deprive me of the one solitary pleasure in my life?"

And here, even, the Tsarina's influence is of no avail. She who had set her face against the custom hitherto prevalent among the ladies of the Court, of smoking here, there, and everywhere, and had succeeded at the cost of much popularity, failed lamentably when she attempted a similar corrective on her husband. He stuck to his cigars, and she gave him up as a bad job.

So much for the Tsar's one vice.

At seven o'clock punctually, you will find him at his desk. It is said that his Ministers, knowing his conscientious habits of studying every document sent for his signature, ply him with many more than are strictly necessary, in order to leave him as little time as possible for brooding over Peace Conferences and similar ideas, which they regard with anything but favourable eyes. Be that as it may, he digests and signs close on a thousand documents a week.

Just imagine what this means!

The average managing director of a bank, railway company, or publishing office, has to deal solely with documents connected with his special line of business. The business of the Managing Director of the Russian Empire deals with every imaginable subject under the sun. Does some question on Church ritual arise, the Tsar must solve it; is such and such a Governor to be appointed—the Tsar must decide; a knotty point of law has arisen—it is put before the Tsar; Prince X—— has a grievance—is it valid?—get the Tsar's opinion; a criminal pleads for clemency—the Tsar must learn the ins and outs of his case; a new submarine has been proposed for the navy—the Tsar's sanction must be obtained; all questions of foreign diplomacy must be laid before the Tsar; all financial problems must receive the Tsar's yes or no. But why go on, when the list of subjects contained in the documents brought before this overworked ruler are simply incalculable? And he is not the man to shirk one jot or tittle of his work. Understand all the questions put for his decision—and some involve the nicest special knowledge—he frankly cannot, but try to understand them he certainly does. Hardly a paper leaves his desk without some comment written in his own handwriting in the margin.

At eleven o'clock the first part of the Tsar's daily work is over and the second part begins. A private secretary removes the signed documents from his desk. It is the hour of audience; important matters of State must be discussed; generals, ministers, and gentlemen of the household are ushered in, and stand reverently before their young master, until a curt nod of dismissal backs them out of his presence.

On a certain day every week, between the hours of eleven and one, the burly, genial, iron-hearted de Plehve expounded his ideas before his monarch, and received his orders. He was on his way to the palace when the Nihilist bomb blew him to pieces. Perhaps he would be followed by Pobiedonoszeff—the head of the Greek Church, and the terrible, uncrowned Master of Russia—by Kuropatkin, before he took the field; by Lamsdorff, the Foreign Minister; or by any of those great, sinister personalities whose unwieldy names have figured so largely in the newspapers of late.

But listen! The little clock on the mantelpiece strikes one. Pobiedonoszeff is just at the moment engaged in demonstrating the folly of Lamsdorff's latest move. In Russia, statesmen make no bones about intriguing behind each other's backs. The Tsar rises abruptly to his feet in the middle of one of his minister's sentences. The cold, smooth voice breaks off; the minister bows, and, with an ease bred of long custom, backs towards the door and into the ante-chamber

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beyond. He knows well enough how useless it would be to say another word, for the Tsar lunches *en famille* at one, and rather than keep the Tsarina waiting, Lamsdorff or any other minister may commit all the follies under the sun.

It is a beautiful, cheery room which Nicholas enters, the windows commanding a fair prospect of the sea and the gloomy forts of Cronstadt. Once over the threshold he unbends; he is no longer the Tsar, he is the husband and the father. He kisses his wife; his children are about him. He has a pleasant word for the stolid, rough, good-natured Russian servants posted behind every chair round the table. Yes, he is quite another man, this poor young ruler, in the bosom of his family. The awful cares of State are forgotten—for the moment—and the Tsarina is very careful not to recall them to his mind. The talk is all about family matters—little events in the lives of the children, trivialities of the nursery—and the talk is all English talk, which the Tsar speaks without the slightest suspicion of a foreign accent.

From two to four is the Imperial play time, which the Tsar, according to the season of the year, or the palace in which he may be staying, devotes to walking, cycling, shooting, skating, riding, or lawn-tennis. Sometimes the Tsarina accompanies him, sometimes he is alone—that is to say, without a companion. He is never really alone. Wherever he goes, he is always shadowed by sentries, detectives, or police agents, who are entrusted with the care of his person. These men may not be visible to him—indeed, they endeavour to make themselves as scarce as possible, for nothing the Tsar detests more than to be reminded that he is, after all, little better than a man under sentence of some awful death indefinitely reprieved. But, nevertheless, they are there, these stealthy guardians, and their eyes never leave him for a moment.

Although he keenly enjoys all forms of

Of all recreation the Tsar loves picnicking best, and the Tsarina delights in preparing the luncheon with her own hands.

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outdoor exercise, the Tsar is a very poor hand at most sports and games. Unlike his English double, the Prince of Wales, he is a bad fisherman, and an uncertain shot. He plays tennis with great zest and enthusiasm, but has never even mastered the art of overhand serving. So you can imagine that his play is not exactly a series of fireworks. On a bicycle he is perhaps seen at his best.

It was on one of his cycling trips, a few years ago, that Nicholas met with the following quaint adventure. He was in the country at the time and some distance away from home. A tyre burst. Nicholas dismounted and began to put his Imperial wits to the task of repairing the damage. He was so busily engrossed that he did not notice a horseman trotting by until a gruff voice broke on his ear:

"What is the meaning of this, sir? Don't you know that you must salute your superior officer?"

You see, the Tsar happened to be wearing the uniform of a certain regiment at the time. He looked round, and above him towered a ponderous, irate-looking general.

"I beg your pardon," replied Nicholas meekly, "but I have been so short a time on the throne that as yet I do not know all my generals by sight."

The recreation the Tsar enjoys best of all is picnicking. It is when residing at Livadia, his beautiful country home in the Crimea, that he indulges this weakness as often as those never-ceasing documents will permit. With the Tsarina, and a few chosen friends, he starts for a "happy day" in the beautiful highland forests which surround Livadia. The Tsarina and her children drive; the Tsar and his friends usually ride beside the carriage.

An hour or two up the hills and through the valleys, and the spot chosen for the picnic is reached. The provisions are unloaded and the Tsarina takes charge. If her husband enjoys himself, she, poor woman, revels in a little peregrination of this sort, when for a few hours, the hateful rigidity and cares of Court life are forgotten. All her girlhood she spent in the happiest and simplest of homes, where money was comparatively scarce and picnics were treats in a very different sense to what they are to her to-day.

The provisions then are laid out on the grass, and the Tsarina dons a white apron and busily sets to work preparing lunch. She lights the samovars, places the cold drinks out of the sun, and starts with a will on the manufacture of sandwiches. If any of the guests expect caviare and anchovy dainties on one of these picnics, they will be grievously disappointed. Good, honest, bread and butter, ham-and-tongue sandwiches, are all they get—very nice ones, for the Tsarina knows her business.

Meanwhile, the Tsar has been enjoying himself in his own peculiar fashion—lying flat on his back on the grass and looking up at the sky.

So much for the Tsar's recreations.

Soon after four o'clock the Tsar, always faithful to English customs, takes afternoon tea with the Tsarina and any members of the Imperial household whom she may have invited to join them. The Tsar, generally abstemious to a fault—he would far better please his subjects were he a bluff, burly, hard-drinking monarch—has an infinite capacity for very strong tea. His physicians have warned him against this indulgence, which is particularly injurious to a man so liable as he to nervous disorders, but their warnings have been received with precisely the same obstinacy as he showed when tackled on the subject of cigars.

Punctually at five o'clock, the perusal of documents continues, and goes on till seven. After which, any minister, with some particularly urgent business to be discussed, is granted a brief audience, and at half-past seven the Tsar goes to dinner.

Dinner is a more or less formal affair. It was the custom of the Tsar's father to have about a dozen guests for this meal, and Nicholas, although he would greatly prefer dining *en famille*, follows his example. Some members of the Imperial Family are always present, and a sprinkling of generals, ministers, and other high officials complete the party.

A certain general—Dragomiroff, the famous rival of Kuropatkin, if I am not mistaken—once remarked that the only cloud which marred the perfect geniality and pleasantness of these dinners was the food.

Russians have a great weakness for highly spiced, elaborate dishes, but the Tsar with his English tastes prefers food the simpler the better. His dinners consist of five or six courses of plain wholesome food, which set the guests yearning for the dishes of their own specially imported French *chefs*.

At dinner the Tsar prefers to sit quietly and listen to the conversation rather than take any leading part in it himself. A lively talker he delights in, a man who has seen the world and life, and can describe his experiences with vivacity. "Englishmen make good friends," he once said, "but they

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can't talk. Americans are the most amusing people in the world."

Nicholas has a peculiar, eminently Russian weakness for gambling. After dinner he sits down to a rubber of bridge—or "britch" to give it its proper name, for Russia indulged in our national mania long before most of us were born—or preferably a game called "wint' in which fortunes can be lost or won at a single sitting. They say that the Tsar's excitement on such occasions is a revelation.

He is no longer that tired, nervous, irritable person his ministers know so well. He is all alert, his whole person breathes intense eagerness. He is a born gambler, cool-headed, rapid, bold, full of resource, a master of strategy, and most dangerous when fighting an uphill game.

Later on in the evening the Tsar frequently entertains his guests with music. He plays them his own compositions or gets the Tsarina to do so, she being a far more skilled pianist than him.

Generally at about half-past ten the party breaks up, the guests leave, the Tsarina retires, and Nicholas is left alone with those eternal documents which he often studies until the early hours of the morning.

Sunday is the day of comparative rest in the Imperial household. There is Divine service, a little of the more important work to be got through, and a few informal audiences—but mainly it is a day of rest. And, above all, it is the children's day.

What, I wonder, would those many millions of his humble subjects think—those millions who regard him as a species of demi-god—could they see the Great White Tsar romping with his charming little girls, or crawling about on hands and knees, and going through all manner of weird antics for their amusement?

The Tsar loves nothing better than a romp with his children.

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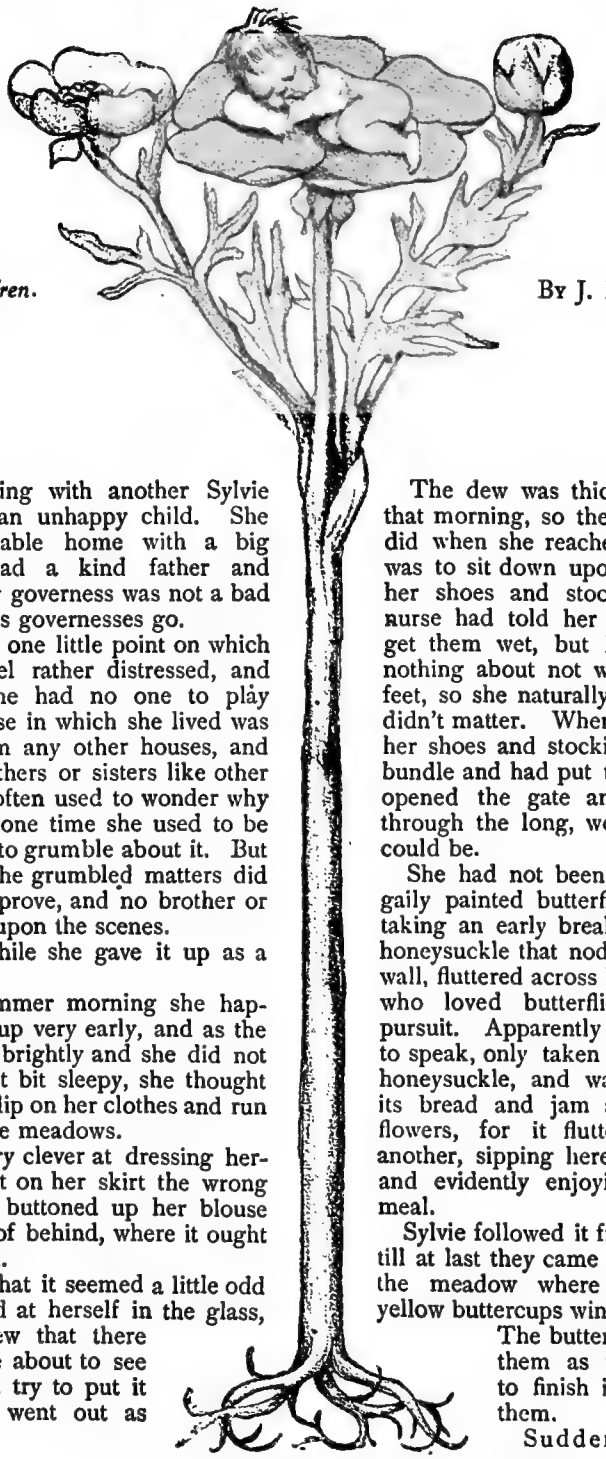
THE BROWNIE'S SCHOOL



A Tale for Children.

By J. Douglas Hoare.

Taking one thing with another Sylvie was not at all an unhappy child. She had a comfortable home with a big garden, she had a kind father and mother, and her governess was not a bad sort of person as governesses go.

But there was one little point on which she used to feel rather distressed, and that was that she had no one to play with. The house in which she lived was a long way from any other houses, and she had no brothers or sisters like other children. She often used to wonder why this was, and at one time she used to be rather disposed to grumble about it. But however much she grumbled matters did not seem to improve, and no brother or sister appeared upon the scenes.

So after a while she gave it up as a bad job.

Now one summer morning she happened to wake up very early, and as the sun was shining brightly and she did not feel in the least bit sleepy, she thought that she would slip on her clothes and run out to play in the meadows.

She wasn't very clever at dressing herself, and she put on her skirt the wrong way round, and buttoned up her blouse in front instead of behind, where it ought to have buttoned.

She thought that it seemed a little odd when she looked at herself in the glass, but as she knew that there would be no one about to see her she did not try to put it right but just went out as she was.

The dew was thick upon the ground that morning, so the first thing that she did when she reached the meadow gate was to sit down upon a bench and take her shoes and stockings off. For her nurse had told her that she must never get them wet, but her nurse had said nothing about not wetting her legs and feet, so she naturally supposed that they didn't matter. When she had rolled up her shoes and stockings into a neat little bundle and had put them in the dry, she opened the gate and scampered away through the long, wet grass as happy as could be.

She had not been there long when a gaily painted butterfly, which had been taking an early breakfast off a spray of honeysuckle that nodded over the garden wall, fluttered across her path, and Sylvie, who loved butterflies, started off in pursuit. Apparently the butterfly had, so to speak, only taken its porridge off the honeysuckle, and was now looking for its bread and jam among the meadow flowers, for it fluttered from one to another, sipping here and tasting there, and evidently enjoying a really hearty meal.

Sylvie followed it from flower to flower till at last they came to the far corner of the meadow where a lovely mass of yellow buttercups winked in the sunlight. The butterfly fluttered towards them as though it intended to finish its breakfast among them.

Suddenly, however, it

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seemed to change its mind, and instead of settling upon them it hung poised in the air above the tallest in evident surprise.

"Bless my soul!" it seemed to be saying "what a very extraordinary buttercup! I wonder if it is good to eat."

Then another butterfly joined it, and another, and another, till at last half-a-dozen of them were dancing about in the air in a great state of excitement.

"I wonder what the matter can be," thought Sylvie, as she scampered across the field.

When she reached the flower over which the butterflies were hovering she was no less surprised than they, for in its cup the funniest, brownest little baby boy that she had ever seen was curled up fast asleep. The tall buttercup which swayed to and fro in the breeze evidently made it a delicious cradle, and the brown baby lay there with its little eyelids tight shut and its little thumb between its rosy lips, looking supremely comfortable.

As soon as Sylvie saw what the buttercup contained she simply jumped for joy. "Why," she cried, "here is my little brother at last!" and she made off for the house as fast as her legs could carry her. Her father and mother were abroad at the time, but the nurse was upstairs getting the breakfast ready, so Sylvie ran up to tell her the good news.

Nurse was, as you may imagine, a little surprised when Sylvie burst into the room with no shoes and stockings on, and her clothes the wrong way round. But before she had had time to scold her, Sylvie had informed her that her little brother had arrived, and that now she would have someone to play with.

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the nurse, sinking back into a chair all of a heap, "to think that he's come at last! How pleased your mamma will be to hear it! But wherever did you find him?"

"He's asleep in a buttercup at the bottom of the meadow," cried Sylvie, "come and see for yourself!"

So Sylvie took her nurse down the meadow to where the baby was lying asleep in the buttercup with the butterflies still hovering above his head.

And nurse picked the buttercup very carefully and carried it back to the house, baby and all. The baby woke up when it got to the nursery and opened its eyes. But it did not seem in the least astonished at what it saw, and it did not cry like other babies, not even when they washed and dressed it in some clothes which Sylvie used to wear when she was very small.

The pace at which that baby grew was simply amazing. It often grew out of as many as three frocks in a single day, and it had to have a new cradle once a week. After about a month it was as big as Sylvie herself, but when it had reached her size it seemed satisfied and grew more slowly, not faster, indeed, than an ordinary child.

But, though this was certainly very wonderful, there was one thing which seemed more surprising still to Sylvie, and that was the way in which her new brother—who was, I ought to say, called Jack—learnt his lessons. She herself always had a lot of trouble over her lessons, and things had a horrid way of slipping in at one ear and out at the other.

But it was quite different with Jack.

He could do long French exercises in less than half-a-minute, he could multiply 1234567 by 7654321 and get it right the first time, and he could tell you where Timbuctoo is, and what its principal products are, almost before the question was out of your mouth. The way in which he learnt things was positively uncanny, and Sylvie once heard her nurse tell the governess that Jack was either very clever indeed or else he was a Brownie child. And when nurse said that, the governess looked very serious, though she didn't say anything. But Sylvie wished that she had been a Brownie child too, if all Brownie children learnt their lessons as easily as Jack.

Now one night, not long after this, Sylvie was awakened by a terrible thunderstorm. She was rather afraid of thunder, so she thought that she would run in and see Jack, who slept next door, for company's sake. So she slipped out of bed and crept as quietly as she could to his room.

"Are you awake, Jack?" she asked, knocking softly at his door. But there was no answer. "Are you awake?" she asked louder; still no reply. "He must be very sound asleep indeed," she thought, so, turning the handle, she opened the door.

Just as she entered a bright flash of lightning lit up the room, and Sylvie saw, to her surprise, that he was not in his bed. A night-light was burning on the table, so she took it in her hand and looked first under the bed, then behind the curtains, and then in the cupboard, thinking that perhaps Jack had been frightened at the storm and had hidden himself.

But no, he was not there.

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Sylvie was now beginning to get alarmed, and was just thinking of going to wake up nurse, when she heard a sound at the window, and, looking round, she saw Jack sitting on the sill.

"Good gracious, Jack," she cried, "where have you been to? Aren't you wet through?"

"Oh, no!" said Jack, jumping down into the room. "The rain can't hurt me."

"But where have you been to?" Sylvie repeated.

"Will you promise not to tell?" asked Jack, coming close up to her.

"Yes, I'll promise," said Sylvie.

"Well, then," said Jack, "I've been to the Brownie school."

"The Brownie school! What's that?" cried Sylvie.

"Why, where we Brownies learn our lessons, of course," Jack answered.

"But are you a Brownie?" asked Sylvie.

"Of course I am," said Jack. "Didn't you guess?"

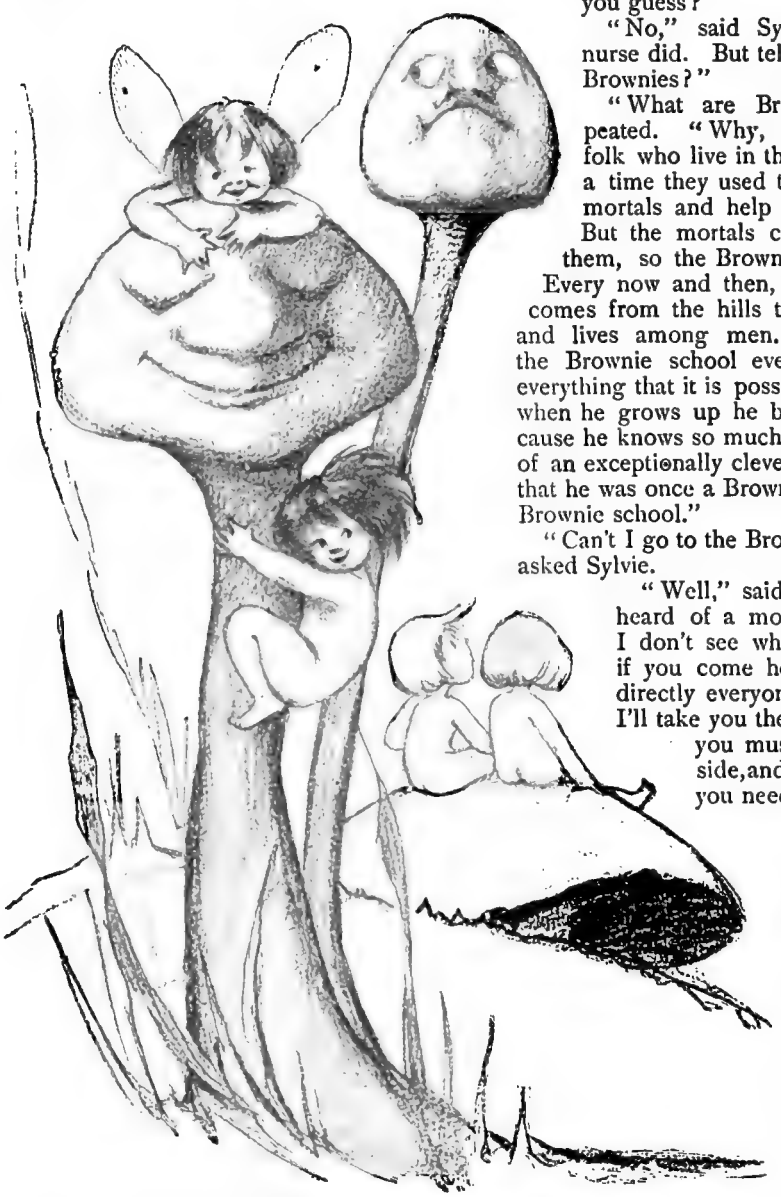
"No," said Sylvie, "but I think nurse did. But tell me, Jack, what are Brownies?"

"What are Brownies?" Jack repeated. "Why, Brownies are little folk who live in the hills. Once upon a time they used to visit the homes of mortals and help them in their work. But the mortals ceased to believe in them, so the Brownies left them alone. Every now and then, however, a Brownie comes from the hills to the upper world and lives among men. And he goes to the Brownie school every night and learns everything that it is possible to know. And when he grows up he becomes famous because he knows so much. So when you hear of an exceptionally clever man you will know that he was once a Brownie and learnt at the Brownie school."

"Can't I go to the Brownie school, too?" asked Sylvie.

"Well," said Jack, "I've never heard of a mortal going there, but I don't see why you shouldn't, so if you come here to-morrow night directly everyone has gone to bed, I'll take you there. But remember, you must keep close to my side, and while I am with you, you needn't be frightened."

All next day Sylvie was in a tremendous state of excitement, and so absent-minded that her governess told her that if she didn't know her French irregular verbs better next day she shouldn't have a half-holiday on Saturday. Sylvie, however, didn't mind a bit, for she knew that she was



On every toadstool but one, three or four little Brownies were sitting.

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going to the Brownie school that night, and that the French irregular verbs would simply run off her tongue next morning.

She could hardly contain herself with impatience when she went to bed. As a rule, she fell asleep directly her head touched the pillow, but to-night she lay very wide awake indeed, waiting and longing for the time when her governess should go to bed. Never before had hours seemed to pass so slowly, but at last she heard her governess' footsteps in the passage, then her door closed and all was quiet. Sylvie slipped out of bed, stole across to Jack's room, and knocked at the door.

"Is that you, Sylvie?" Jack asked.

"Yes," said Sylvie. "Is it time to start?"

"Have they all gone to bed?" Jack inquired.

"I heard governess shut her door just now, and nurse is snoring very loud," Sylvie answered.

"Come along then," said Jack, and Sylvie went in and found Jack standing in the middle of the room in his nightshirt.

"Now then, Sylvie," said he, "come along with me and don't be frightened," and he led her across to the window, which was wide open. When he had got there he gave a low whistle, said a long word which Sylvie could not catch, and, lo and behold, a huge black cat suddenly appeared on the windowsill.

"Up you jump!" cried Jack, and, almost before she knew what had happened, she found herself on the cat's back, with Jack seated behind her. Jack said another word even longer than the first, the cat sprang into the air and dashed through the clouds, with the two children clinging tightly to its fur.

At first Sylvie was rather frightened, but she soon got used to it, and when she found that the cat was coming to earth again she was sorry that the ride was over. The cat finally landed them on the side of a hill, and no sooner had she reached the ground than Sylvie and Jack sprang off.

The hill was different from any that Sylvie had ever seen. It was quite small, but it was covered all over with large toadstools—not toadstools like those in the field at home, but toadstools with big, beaming faces, which seemed to smile complacently upon them. On every toadstool but one, three or four little Brownies were sitting; they had no paper, no pencils, and no books, but Sylvie knew perfectly well that they were waiting for their lessons to begin.

Jack took Sylvie by the hand and led her towards the vacant toadstool.

"Come," he said; "this place is reserved for us," and they scrambled up on to it together.

Hardly were they seated, when the rim of the moon showed above the hill, and a hush fell upon the Brownies, who up to this time had been chattering merrily, without paying the least attention to Sylvie.

"Here is our mistress," said Jack; "we are just in time."

As he spoke, the moon rose clear of the earth and smiled pleasantly down upon the Brownies.

"Ah!" she said, "so my pupils are ready for me. Are you all there?"

"Yes, mistress," piped the assembled Brownies; "we are all here."

"It seems to me," said the moon, "that there is one more pupil than usual."

Jack stood up on the toadstool.

"Please, Mistress Moon," he said, "I have brought my little human sister with me."

"Well," said the moon, "it is a little unusual, but in your case I will make an exception. What is it that you want to learn, my dear?"

"Please, Mistress Moon," said Sylvie, "I want to learn the French irregular verbs."

"That's easily arranged," said the moon. "Verbs, where are you?"

The words were hardly out of her mouth when scores of little imps sprang out of the grass round the toadstool.

"Here we are, Mistress Moon," they cried.

"Now, open your mouth, my dear," said the moon, and Sylvie did as she was told.

"Are you ready, verbs?" cried the moon.

"We are," the imps answered.

"Then one, two, three, and away!" said the moon.

At that the imps leapt into the air, and, curling themselves up into little balls, no larger than compound rhubarb pills, jumped head first, one after another, down Sylvie's throat. It was a little startling at first, and when the moon asked her if there was anything else that she wanted to know, she answered, very politely: "Not this evening, thank you very much indeed," feeling that one dose of imps at a time was quite enough.

So the moon passed on down the row of Brownies, and taught this one a page of geography, that one the dates of the Kings of England, another a few multiplication tables, another the A B C, all with the help of her imps. Then, when the Brownies had all learnt what they wanted to know, the moon sailed on her way across the sky.

School was now over for the night, so Jack

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gave another whistle, spoke another long word, and the black cat appeared at his side. The two children scrambled up on to its back, and, after a few seconds' journey through the air, they found themselves safe back at home again. Sylvie slipped back into bed as quietly as she could, and fell sound asleep as soon as her head had touched the pillows.

I really don't know whether Sylvie or her governess was most astonished next morning when the French lesson began. As a rule, Sylvie could not remember an irregular verb for two minutes together; but now they came pattering out one after the other as quick as Sylvie could speak them, and she not only got her Saturday half-holiday, but an extra one into the bargain.

The black cat appeared. The two children scrambled up on to its back, and, after a few seconds . . . found themselves safe back at home.

Every night after this she went off to the Brownie school with Jack. One night she swallowed the whole geography of Europe; another night she gulped down multiplication, addition, and subtraction. Another night the moon gave her a good stiff dose of music, till at last Sylvie knew very nearly as much as her own governess.

One day, however, poor Jack fell down and broke his arm. The doctor came and set the bone, packed it up in long bandages and plaster of Paris, and said that he must go to bed and stay there with someone to take care of him night and day. So a nurse came down from London, and announced her intention of staying with him most of the day, and sitting by his side all night.

Sylvie was in despair, and didn't know what to do, for she had begun to enjoy the fun of going to the Brownie school, not to mention the fact that she was able to learn her lessons there without any trouble at all. But she was very much afraid that she would never be able to get there without Jack to help her; so, when the nurse had gone out of the room for a few minutes to get him some lemonade, she went in to see him, and confided her troubles to him.

"Well," said Jack, when he had heard what she had got to say, "it's rather difficult, of course; but I don't see why you shouldn't go alone. All you've got to do is to lean out of your window, whistle softly, and say the magic word 'gosgamer,' and the cat will appear by your side. When you are ready to start, you must just say 'jocalo,' and the cat will fly with you to the Brownie school; and when it is time to come home, you must whistle again and say 'kibaldi,' and the cat will come and fetch you. The Brownies won't hurt you, because you are a friend of mine, and the moon is sure to be glad to see you."

Sylvie was a little nervous about going by herself, but she determined to go, nevertheless. So, when evening came and she was supposed to be safe in bed, she put her head out of the window and whistled softly. But then she made a mistake, for she wasn't much of a hand at remembering long words, except when she had learnt them by the Brownie method.

So, instead of saying "gosgamer," she said "remagsog," which, as you will see, is the same word, only the wrong way round. The cat appeared on the windowsill right enough, but with its tail towards her instead of its head. She climbed up on its back, however, and then she made another mistake, for she said "olacoj" instead of "jocalo," and the cat dashed through the air tail first.

Sylvie had the greatest difficulty in holding on, and she was really becoming a little bit frightened. She was still more frightened when they arrived at the hill and found that all the toadstools were growing upside down, and that the Brownies were standing on their heads. And when the moon rose she rose with her chin first instead of her eyebrows; and when the imps went down her throat they

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went feet first instead of head first; and when she called the cat she said the word backwards again, so that they travelled home the wrong way round, and she went to bed feeling exceedingly muddled.

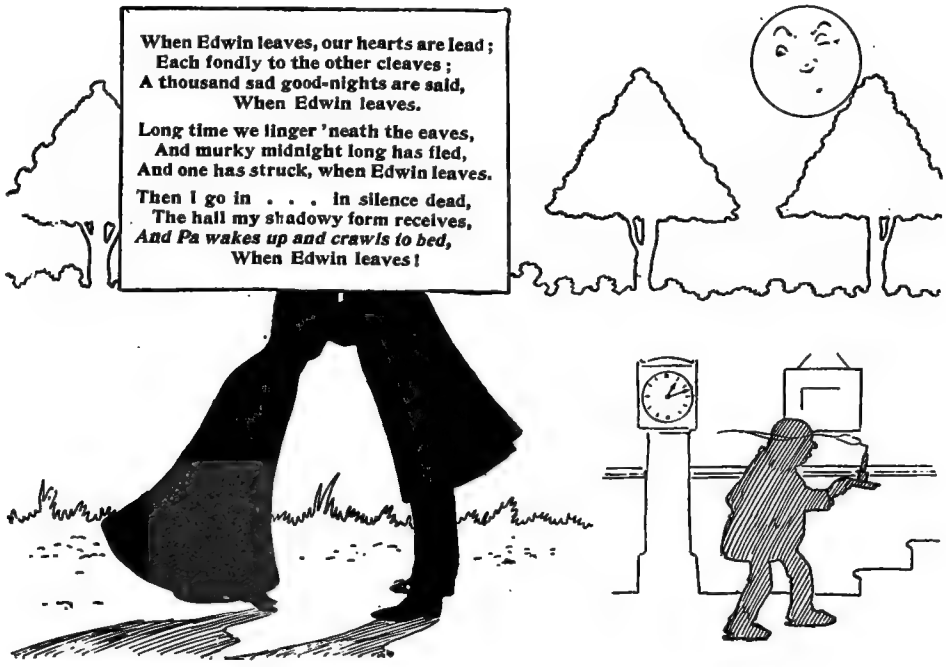
But worse was still to come; for when she did her lessons next day, she gave all the answers the wrong way, so that when her governess asked her the French for "to love," she said "remia," and she also stated that twice eight was sixty-one, and that the capital of England was Nodnol. Then her governess got quite cross, and said that Sylvie was so stupid that she probably didn't even know her own name. And Sylvie, who by this time was crying bitterly, said that, of course, her name was Eivlys.

The doctor happened to be in the house at the time seeing to Jack's arm, so the governess asked him if he would mind stepping into the schoolroom and examining Sylvie. He asked her a few questions, and as she always gave him the answer the wrong way round, he said that he thought she must have been overworking herself. The governess said that she certainly had been getting on remarkably fast lately, so they came to the conclusion that she had better have a month's holiday.

Sylvie never went back to the Brownie's school after this, but, as she had really learnt everything that she wanted to know, it didn't matter much.

Jack, however, went there every night after his arm had got better, except once when he caught the measles. In a few years he became so clever that he knew almost everything that there is to know. Of course, he soon became famous for his wisdom, and if you ask your father to read a few bits out of the paper on any morning that you like, you are sure to find the name of Jack mentioned in one or two at least. You see if you don't!

When Edwin Leaves


When Edwin leaves, our hearts are lead;
Each fondly to the other cleaves;
A thousand sad good-nights are said,
When Edwin leaves.
Long time we linger 'neath the eaves,
And murky midnight long has fled,
And one has struck, when Edwin leaves.
Then I go in . . . in silence dead,
The hall my shadowy form receives,
And Pa wakes up and crawls to bed,
When Edwin leaves!

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MR. —HIS PAGES.

I puzzle and I mystify,
I turn about and twistify,
I simply heaps of fun supply,
For I am Mr. X!

If you can read my pages o'er,
Without at least ten laughs or more,
You must *be what the Scotch call dour,*
Or I'm not Mr. X!

Puzzle Penknives or Puzzle Purses will be given as prizes to readers who forward *new* puzzles, problems, or other tricks which are inserted in this feature. Any readers communicating with "Mr. X," and wishing for a reply, should inclose a stamped addressed envelope. All letters should be addressed to "Mr. X" (care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE), 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Mr. X's Monthly Prize.
No. 6.

[Answers must be sent in before December 20th, addressed "Mr. X," care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., and marked on the outside "No. 6."]

Everybody knows the game of "Telegrams"—a "telegram" has to be written, each word of which must commence with the letters, in their order, of a selected word. The name of the person to whom the message is sent is not to be included. Well, "Mr. X" this month offers a prize of Five Shillings to the sender of what is in his opinion the best "telegram" whose nine words commence respectively with the letters **C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S.** The "telegram" is to be a message to "Mr. X," and may contain seasonable wishes, suggestions, praise (or blame!).

A Remarkable Word.

JAMES: "Here's a curious word I've just come across. See if you can guess it from this."

(He writes on a piece of paper: "L is the third letter, is the beginning and the end.")

JOHN (puzzling over the sentence): "No, I can't make it out at all. What is the word?"

JAMES: "Island."

JOHN: "But you said it began with L and ended with L?"

JAMES: "Not at all." (Taking back the paper he makes some additions, then hands it to John.) "That's what I said."

And the sentence now read as follows: "L is the third letter, 'is' the beginning, 'and' the end."

At Dessert.

TRIPPER: "I'll bet you half-a-crown that without moving from the table I will show you something that you have never seen before, that I have never seen before, that nobody has ever seen before, and that nobody will ever see again."

CARTER: "Done!"

TRIPPER (Taking up a nut, cracking it, and showing the kernel): "There you are, nobody has ever seen that before, and" (swallowing it) "nobody will ever see it again. D'you want any change?"

Unkind.

SHARP: "I say, Jones, why are you a better carpenter than I am?"

JONES: "Am I?"

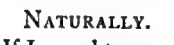
SHARP: "Yes, you're a great deal plainer." (Exit in a hurry.)

Naturally.

SHARPE: "If I caught a newt do you know why it would most certainly be a very small one?"

FLATTE: "No, why?"

SHARPE: "Why, because it would be minute" (my newt).



Not Quite so Bad.

SMITH: "I woke up last night with the terrible sensation that my new gold watch was gone. The impression was so strong that I got up to look."

BROWN: "Well, was it gone?"

SMITH: "No, but it was going."

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Cryptic.

Tomkins asked Watkins what there was for dinner

Watkins, in reply, wrote on a piece of paper:

Join: me at and
i
s

Tomkins could make nothing of it, so Watkins had to explain that it meant "meat and onions." For, if you join "me" and "at," you get "meat," whilst the "and" is "on" "i" which again is "on" "s"—obviously "and onions."

Your Character from Your Age.

"The most certain method of telling a person's character," said Brookes, "is by an ancient formula which I have just learnt. Like to try?"

"Yes," said Rivers.

"Right. You'll be surprised at the truth of what I tell you. Now then, what year were you born?"

"1882."

Write it down on a piece of paper and add your age.

"I'm 22," said Rivers, and wrote down "1904."

"Had your birthday this year? If so, add 4; if not, add 5."

Rivers had just passed his birthday, so wrote down "1908."

"Multiply your total by 1000."

"1908000."

"Subtract 693423."

"1214577."

"Got that?" said Brookes. "Very well. That's your character. Write down A for the figure 1, B for the figure 2, and so on; leave a space after the first letter and after the fourth, and the sentence will tell you what you are."

Then Brookes walked hurriedly away, and Rivers, setting letters to the figures, found to his wrath that he was "A Bad Egg."

Try it on a friend. The result is always the same.

Useless Without an Eye.

Joe: "How do you spell needle?"

Jim: "N-e-i-d-l-e."

Joe: "What's the "i" for?"

Jim: "Why, to put the cotton through, of course."

Poor Boy!

Jack: "What pupil is most to be pitied?"

Bob: "Give it up."

Jack: "The pupil of the eye."

Bob: "But why?"

Jack: "Because it is always beneath the lashes."

Nothing New.

Jones: "Seen the new coins—three for a penny?"

Smith: "Bosh! Third of a penny! Absurd. Why, if they *do* alter the coinage the decim——"

Jones: "But I've bought 'em, I tell you!"

Smith (sneeringly): "Seeing is believing." (Jones quietly produces two farthings and a halfpenny brand-new from the Mint. Collapse of Smith.)

"MR. X's" MONTHLY PRIZE.—No. 3.

RESULT.

"Mr. X" asked for an answer to the following riddle:

Man cannot live without my first,
By day and night 'tis used;
My second is by all accursed,
By day and night abused.

My whole is never seen by day,
And never used by night,
'Tis dear to friends when far away,
But hated when in sight.

There is only one solution which exactly fits these requirements: it is the Latin "Ignis-fatuus," the exact translation of which is "fire-foolish," generally rendered "Will-o'-the-wisp." Our first is therefore "fire"; our second conveys the idea of folly; our whole is "Will-o'-the-wisp." This answer was known and sent in by a great many readers. The prize of five shillings goes to the only one who set out his reply fully, as "Mr. X" has given it—Mr. D. Bratt, Norton, Lincoln. "Mr. X" hoped to find some new answer sufficiently ingenious to win the prize, but none such was sent in. The majority came to grief over the last of "dear to friends when far away"—headache, for example, also toothache. "Mr. X" finds it hard to believe that certain of his readers look back lovingly on the days when they suffered from either of these tortures. Heartache was a very popular reply, but why is it never used by night? Night is surely the time when memory becomes most poignant.

Puzzle penknives are awarded to Mr. W. H. Fawcett, 17 Priory Road, Bedford Park, W., for a good explanation of "Ignis-fatuus"; and to Miss Price, Seaton Villa, Clevedon, Somerset, for the following clever solution in rhyme:

Surely, an "Income" is my first,
By day and night 'tis used;
What but a "Tax" can be accursed,
By night and day abused?

My whole, though never seen by day
And never used by night,
We gladly would have "done away"
For ever from our sight!

Answer: "Income-tax."

OTHER RESULTS.

Making the Part Equal to the Whole (page 27).—The bill was for £2. The debtor paid £1 19s. 11d., thereby saving the creditor the cost of a penny stamp. So, though the former paid less than the full amount, the latter was perfectly satisfied and lost nothing.

In "A Mistake in the Calendar," on page 523, there also appears to have been a mistake in "Trapper's" calculation, and one or two readers have gleefully called attention to it. Mr. Trapper says, sulkily, that if he has got to work the thing out by logarithms and Euclid every time he makes a joke he'll never make one again. Very well, he shan't. Mr. Trapper's name will never again appear in "Mr. X's" pages unless a sufficient number of readers are kind-hearted enough to beg his reinstatement.

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The Earl and the Girl

A River-side Love Story.

By G. B. Burgin.

I.

Kitty did not know that he was an earl, although he was aware at the very first glance that she was the loveliest girl in the world, and the knowledge moved him greatly.

Of course, Kitty's father knew that he was an earl, although only, in a sense, a Canadian earl, for he had been taken by his father to Four Corners at the early age of four (*i.e.*, he was four and not his father; his father was much older—nearly forty), and Four Corners, although it has an exceedingly strict etiquette peculiar to itself, does not boast of

> That repose
> Which marks the caste of Vere de Vere.

In Four Corners, if a man disapproved of another man's manners, he told him so—with a shot-gun—and then the other man explained himself—also with a shot-gun.

The Earl's father speedily adapted himself to this rigid code of etiquette at Four Corners, but only with partial success. Although a good sportsman, he was not sufficiently quick with the shot-gun, and, in the idiomatic language of Four Corners, the other man "got the bulge on him." Hence the Earl, left an orphan at the early age of seven, grew up "on his own," and became a perfervid Four Cornerian, with all the prejudices of that remarkable village.

Everyone was good to him; everyone fed and clothed him; everyone did his—or her—best to "git the durned Britisher" out of him; and so, when the news reached Four Corners that the Earl had come into his own, and, instead of being plain William Biggs, was Algernon Fitzwilliam Simon Roslyn Clarence Hilary Vernon St. Aubyn Carruthers Manyrs, twenty-fifth Earl of Sandilands, Four Corners felt sorry, and advised him to take no notice of the insult.

The Earl would have followed this advice had it not been for the persistent tact and patience of the eminent English solicitor who came over to Four Corners to break the news to him. The solicitor contrived to upset the Earl's theory that an honest, though poor, man is the noblest work of God, by pointing out that an honest rich one is much nobler,

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for he can do so much more with money at his back.

Finally, the Earl agreed to take everything he could get, inwardly resolving that when he had once done so he would make a "bee line" for Four Corners, and there live happily ever after. He stipulated, however, that his identity should not be revealed to anyone until he had definitely made up his mind. Hence, on his arrival in England he was somewhat lonely, and confided his woes to the manager of the bank where an account had been opened to meet his immediate necessities.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," Mr. Burnside sympathetically said. "Let us forget you're an earl, and then Mrs. Burnside will be a mother to you. You shall spend Saturday to Monday with us up the Thames. You've never seen the Thames. Ah! that's what I call a river—the river of pleasure. There is nothing like it in the whole world. We're quiet, humble folk in our way, and after a few days with us you'll feel better able to endure the burden of your rank. If Mrs. Burnside knows you're an earl, she won't take to you so much."

The Earl was delighted.

He wrung the manager's hand until it nearly broke, and agreed to leave Waterloo Station on Saturday morning by the ten o'clock train for Pangham, a little riverine village as yet undiscovered by the crowd.

True to his word and with his travelling bag labelled "William Biggs," the Earl reached Pangham at eleven.

"Now," said Mr. Burnside, who met him at the station, "we'll just go down to the river bank and Kitty shall punt us up to camp."

"Ke—Ke—Kitty!" Mr. Biggs meditated flight. "Is Kitty a girl?"

"My little girl," said the manager reassuringly. The best little girl in the world—and the prettiest. You needn't be afraid of her, she wouldn't hurt a mouse."

But when Mr. Biggs saw Kitty, he was very much afraid of her, for she was so beautiful that, as she stood in the punt, her laughing face upturned to his, it seemed to him as if part of Heaven's blue had descended upon her eyes in two dancing patches.

"Am I to get into this?" he asked, looking down at the punt.

"Of course you are," said Kitty, "if you—if you're not afraid of sinking it."

"Why are you doing that?" asked Kitty.

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"That's what I had in my mind." Mr. Biggs took off his coat with an air of relief, and bared his muscular arms to the elbows.

"Why are you doing that?" asked Kitty.

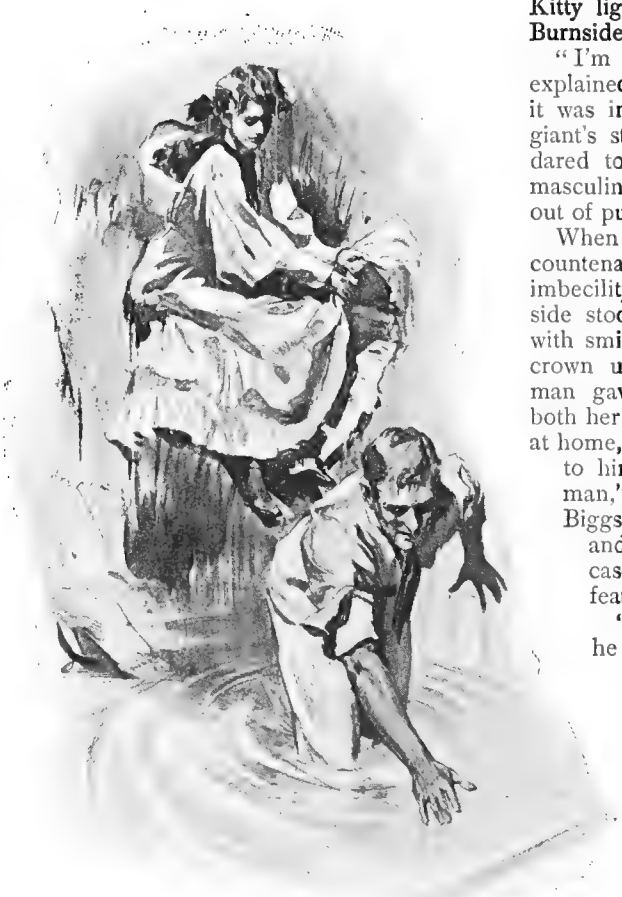
Mr. Biggs looked at Mr. Burnside. His eyes came back to Kitty again. "D'you think, Miss——?"

"Kitty," placidly suggested Mr. Burnside from the cushioned seat in the punt.

"D'you think, Miss Kitty, that two strong men like your father and myself are going to sit here and let you do all the work? If any Four Corners men were to hear of it, they'd lynch me when I got home."

Mr. Burnside laughed. "You don't know my daughter." He looked at her with paternal pride. "She's heaps better at this sort of thing than I am."

Mr. Biggs picked up his bag. "I'm going back to town again unless you let me earn my board."



He recovered the pole, and found Kitty trying hard not to look cross.

"But why do you want to earn a board?" asked Kitty. "Can't you buy a board if you want one? Besides, you don't know the river and I do," Kitty added.

"Never mind. You can tell me where to cross." Mr. Biggs handled the punt pole as if it were a feather, and Kitty sat down.

But when Mr. Biggs began to pole the punt along, Kitty was lost in admiration at his skilled strength. And Mr. Biggs, occupied in so congenial a way, was happy again.

"Ah—h! If I could only hear the Long Sault Falls," he said. "I've heard them day and night ever since I could remember anything."

"Get under the willows and we'll take the strawberries on board," presently suggested Mr. Burnside. "We're close to camp now."

Mr. Biggs tied up the punt, swung Miss Kitty lightly to the shore, then served Mr. Burnside in a similar way.

"I'm used to handling freight," he explained; and the bewildered Kitty felt that it was indeed an excellent thing to have a giant's strength. No one had ever before dared to lift her out of a punt. Perhaps masculine young Canadians always lifted girls out of punts!

When they reached camp, a pug, its flat countenance expressing ferocious yet amiable imbecility, welcomed Kitty, and Mrs. Burnside stood at the landing, her face radiant with smiles, her lovely white hair making a crown upon her stately head. The young man gave a sigh of satisfaction, and held both her hands in his. "You make me feel at home," he said, and Mrs. Burnside "took" to him at once. "That's what I call a man," said she to Kitty, as young Mr. Biggs lit the fire in order to make coffee, and casually put on one side a heavy case of mineral waters as if it were a feather. "How strong he is!"

"Yes," said Kitty demurely; "he—he thinks he is stronger than I am."

II.

After lunch, despite Mr. Biggs' strenuous protests, it was arranged that Kitty should punt the family down to the regatta. There was a quiet firmness about Kitty which convinced Mr. Biggs that she meant to have her own way. Still, it would be down stream, and he could do all the work coming back. Meantime, there

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would be the pleasure of looking at her as she punted.

But this pleasure was not destined to last long, for Kitty's pole suddenly disappeared into a deep hole of which she was unaware, and Kitty went after the pole.

Slipping into the water as noiselessly as an otter, Mr. Biggs found Kitty and brought her safely to th bank. Then he recovered the pole, and found Kitty trying hard not to look cross, for her pretty dress was ruined.

"You'd better go on to the regatta, and I'll walk back to the village," she said, with tears in her voice. "You needn't have got wet too. I can swim."

"Miss Kitty" (the Canadian was a man of action), "I'll run this show if you'll have the kindness to let me."

Mr. Biggs hailed a passing vehicle and gave the man a sovereign. "Make that three-cornered animal of yours travel as if Injuns were after you."

He lifted Kitty into the vehicle and started the horse with a shrill cry which seemed to reveal to it some prehistoric state of existence, for it actually broke into a feeble canter.

"Where are we going?" asked the astonished Kitty.

"You'll just change into dry things, then we'll get another boat," said Mr. Biggs, still encouraging the horse with Comanche war-whoops.

Suddenly, Kitty gave a little cry. "We've forgotten father and mother."

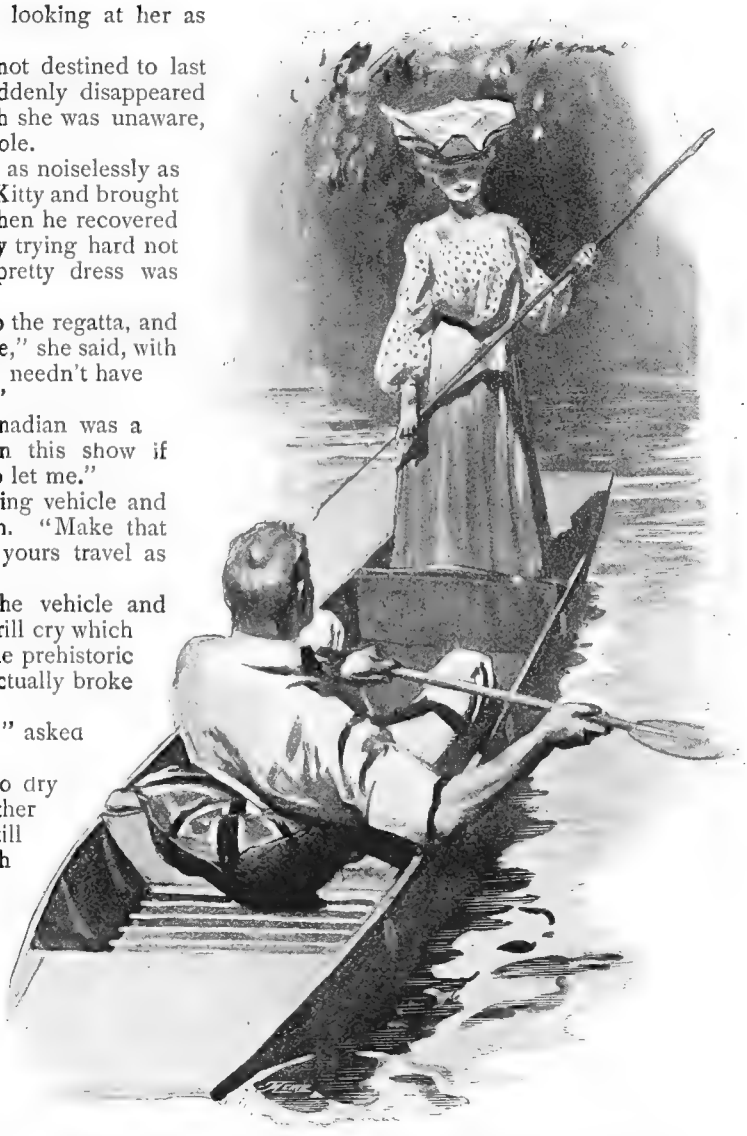
"There was a paddle in the punt," said Mr. Biggs. "Your father will look after Mrs. Burnside. Here we are."

He watched Kitty run into the house. In a quarter of an hour, she reappeared looking prettier and daintier than ever. The carriage was still waiting. Mr. Biggs, too, seemed dry again.

"I got the driver to rub me down in the hen-house," he explained. "If you'll get in, we'll take a short cut to the regatta. I've sent on a man for a boat."

"But he will charge you three pounds for the afternoon," said Kitty, as the ramshackle old vehicle swayed along the dusty road.

"That's only fifteen dollars; it's worth it," said Mr. Biggs. "Here we are."



"Do you mean to say you will trust your life to me after my silly mistake just now?" asked Kitty.

He gave the driver another sovereign, patted the horse, and handed Kitty into a delightfully elegant punt. Then he sat down on the cushions, and looked at her expectantly.

"Do you mean to say you'll trust your life to me after my silly mistake just now?" asked Kitty, filled with amazement at his tact.

"Why not?"

"Suppose I upset you?"

"Well?"

"You'll get wet again."

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"I've swam the Ottawa dozens of times when I've been in a hurry. You don't suppose, Miss Burnside, that I mind swimming across a dear little creek like this? Why, it just keeps one comfortably moist."

Kitty laughed, and poled the punt down stream, Mr. Biggs lazily watching the water drip from her pretty fingers. As he watched, his duty became clear. No more for him the dear delights of Four Corners, the amber-flowing river, the giant mountains, the firefly-haunted moonlit nights, the cry of distant whip-poor-will answered by the wailing chuckles of the loons. This beautiful little garden-island was the home of his ancestors. It cried out to him to acknowledge himself her son.

"See here, Miss Kitty." He looked her squarely in the face. "I feel as if I'd known you all my life, and I want your advice."

"My advice."

"Yes, your advice. I'm in a heap of trouble."

"Trouble! Oh, I'm so sorry."

"Yes—trouble. And you're about the only person who can get me out of it."

"I!"

"Yes, you. I've no call to worry you about my affairs, only you've so much horse sense."

"Horse sense!"

"Horse sense."

"I don't understand you."

"Well, it's this way. A horse is the most sensible animal in the world, that's why in Canada we speak of 'horse sense.' Supposing you had been brought up all your life in a certain way, and then the choice came to you of being someone else and living a different life, with lots of duties and responsibilities, and you didn't want to do it. Then, one day, you met someone who hammered into you the fineness of it all. What would you do then?"

Kitty was so busily engaged in threading her way through the mass of punts opposite the flagstaff that she was quite unable to follow the ins and outs of Mr. Bigg's predicament. "I beg your pardon," she said, "but people keep bumping into us, and I can't quite understand you."

"Let me upset the boat and take you ashore again; then we can talk as we go back to the village for a fresh dress."

Kitty laughed.

Before Mr. Biggs could say anything more, there was a hail from Mr. Burnside, and they came alongside the punt which they had left so unceremoniously three quarters of an hour ago. "Then there *wa* a paddle in the punt, father?" asked Kitty.

"It would have been cheerful for us if there hadn't been one," said Mr. Burnside. "We saw you land, and knew you'd come on again directly you'd changed your dress, Kitty. Your mother was on the point of tears."

Mr. Biggs looked reproachfully at Kitty's mother. "Didn't you feel she was safe with me?" he asked earnestly.

"Safe with you!" Mrs. Burnside started at something in his tone.

"Can a stranger go in for any of these little races?" asked Mr. Biggs.

"Of course," said Mr. Burnside heartily. "I'm on the committee, and the entries don't close for the next half-hour. Come along, I'll introduce you to the committee. We're not very formal here."

As a result of her father's introduction to the committee, Kitty and her mother had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Biggs cover himself with glory, particularly when mounted on a barrel and swimming with his legs, he distanced all other similarly-equipped competitors by twenty yards.

The other competitors rolled off their hobby horses and towed them along, but Mr. Biggs, with characteristic tenacity, "stayed put" on his wabbling steed and was awarded a gorgeous silver cup which he, in his turn, presented to Mrs. Burnside.

"I'd love to win one for you, Miss Kitty," he said simply; "but it's nicer being with you all than rowing in a crowd."

Mr. Burnside bustled up. "There's an extra race. Can you scull?"

Mr. Biggs smiled modestly. "Can I scull! Would you really like a cup, Miss Kitty?"

In another man this would have savoured of arrogance. Mr. Biggs, however, simply meant that he would win the race or perish in the attempt.

An hour later, he justified his question by coming in a hundred yards ahead of the Pangham champion, who had obligingly lent him a boat.

"It doesn't seem right," he said, as he poled the punt back in the starlight, "not to win one for Mr. Burnside too."

Mr. Burnside laughingly disclaimed any desire to fatigue Mr. Biggs still further, and he poled on, delightedly gazing at the illuminated house-boats and the masked musicians.

"It mayn't be a wide river," he assured Mr. Burnside on Monday morning, as he

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took his departure; "but it's a *great* river, for all that. Maybe, next Saturday, you'll all come down to see me where I'm staying?"

Mr. Burnside warningly declared that it was very kind of Mr. Biggs, but that he had asked the Earl of Sandilands to join them on the following Saturday. Mr. Biggs started, then his countenance cleared. If he wanted to see Kitty again, he must do it in his new character. It seemed to him that he had made a very good start in the old one.

There was something in her father's tone which Kitty did not understand. After Mr. Biggs had gone (Kitty would have liked to have seen a little more regret in his face), Mr. Burnside seemed worried, and did not join in his wife's hearty appreciation of their visitor.

"Yes, yes," he said absently. "A nice young fellow enough. Perhaps I ought not to have asked him down; but it's done now. Kitty, I want to explain to you that I never thought——"

But Kitty had noiselessly stolen away into the depths of the willows. For the first time in her life, she thought her father unkind, hated herself for being tongue-tied, wished that she had defended the young man. Earl of Sandilands indeed! Why should she be bothered with the Earl of Sandilands next Saturday, when Mr. Biggs had so kindly invited them all to visit him?

Mr. Biggs was worth a dozen earls. No earl could ever have carried her up a river bank in so tender and chivalrous a manner. She was very absent-minded all day as she sat in the punt dabbling her fingers in the water and smiling to herself.

When she got back to the cottage that night, Kitty took the shrunken dress out of the cupboard and kissed it because Mr. Biggs had admired it. Then she blamed herself greatly, and went to sleep.

III.

On the following Saturday morning, Mr. Burnside impatiently but vainly awaited the Earl's arrival. He had come to the conclusion that Kitty and the Earl were falling in love with one another, and felt that if the latter appeared in state, it would nip the affair in the bud.

Although he liked the Earl, the Earl was a client; and the mere fact complicated what would otherwise have been a situation simple enough in itself. Kitty, however, was a good girl, and when she realised that Mr. Biggs was the Earl of Sandilands would think no more of him. At least, Mr. Burnside hoped so.

"Look here," said the worried Mr. Burnside. "Earl or no earl, it's bad manners to keep us waiting and spoil the morning. I have to get back to the bank again next week and can't afford to waste my time. Come along, Kitty. I'll row you and your mother down to the island."

Kitty did not move,

"We shall see the Earl coming along the towing path," resumed Mr. Burnside.

"With a coronet on the top of his Panama and a long retinue of servants carrying his things," said Kitty scornfully. "No thank you, daddy. It is not for your child to meet such exalted, but unpunctual, personages as earls. Take mother to meet the early bird and leave me to look after the lunch. He'll get cold fowl, and I'll make a mayonnaise for him. Beyond that, I decline to recognise his existence. We should have had a far pleasanter time with Mr. Biggs."

"I daresay we should, but Mr. Biggs is—is not what he seems," hastily declared Mr. Burnside, tumbling into the boat in order to avoid meeting Kitty's reproachful eyes.

Kitty made the painter fast to a willow. "What do you mean by that, daddy? Mr. Biggs must be a 'nice man' or you wouldn't have brought him here. I like Mr. Biggs. Will you kindly explain why you have taken this unjust dislike to him?"

"Oh, nothing, child, nothing. I like him very much. You'll find out all about it later. Let go the painter."

Kitty untied the rope, and looked somewhat wistfully after her father and mother. Then she turned up her sleeves and began to make the mayonnaise.

"Have they really gone?" asked a cautious voice from the other side of the tent.

Kitty, about to scream, remembered that her sleeves were tucked up, and hastily began to unroll them.

"Don't," implored the voice, as Mr. Biggs' giant form appeared in the doorway. He carried the biggest bunch of red roses that Kitty had ever seen.

"Don't what?" asked Kitty. "What are you doing here, Mr. Biggs?"

"Don't let me disturb you," faltered Mr. Biggs. "I—I—I've brought you a rose or two."

"But—but—Oh! How lovely! How lovely?" She buried her face in them. "I don't care whether you were invited or not; you shall have some of the mayonnaise

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before they get back." Then she looked at him unsuspiciously. "Did you—did you know they were going to fetch a real live earl?"

Mr. Biggs sat down on the other side of the table. "Of course I knew. What do you take me for?" he asked indignantly. "I waited until they were out of sight, and came over when I saw you weren't with them."

"But what would you have done if I had been with them?"

"Just waited."

Kitty looked at him severely. "Your manners are Canadian. People do not, as a rule, come here without invitations."

"Miss Kitty." He leaned across the table, looking into her eyes the while. "*I've been here every day since I went away.* I couldn't hold out any longer."

"Been—here!"

"Yes; hiding behind those willows," he said bitterly. "And I've been bitten by beetles and spiders and things, and cramped and half starved. My, but I'm thin! And you! I saw you have two helpings of cold beef and salad at lunch yesterday. Two helpings!"

"I didn't know you were there," faltered Kitty.

"I didn't know I'd be there either," said Mr. Biggs, with unconscious pathos. "Suddenly I was there; that's all I know about it. And I didn't get any cold meat and salad."

Kitty became grave. "You ought not to have done it," she said, although the light in her eyes contradicted the coldness of her voice.

"I know I oughtn't." Mr. Biggs straightened himself up with an effort, reached his great brown hand across the table, and took her strong, little one in his. "My! but I've been lonesome for you, Miss Kitty. You might have tumbled overboard so's to give me an excuse to rescue you again. Why, I'd made up my mind if Saturday hadn't come at last, to saw your punt pole nearly in two to make it break and jerk you overboard; but it seemed risky in case I wasn't near enough."

"Risky! I should think so." Kitty hastily tried to withdraw her hand. Mr. Biggs held it firmly. "If you don't mind for a minute," he said forlornly. "Miss Kitty——"

"Ye—es?"

"Do you—do you reckon to like Canadians?"

"In the aggregate—yes."

"I beg your pardon?"

"In the lump," explained Kitty.

"Miss Kitty, I'm that lonesome for you. The light will go out of my life unless you marry me."

"Mr. Biggs!"

"I'm not 'Mr. Biggs' any longer. I've got a secret." Even then the truth did not dawn upon her. "Kitty, you're just the loveliest girl in the whole world; you're the music of the world; I've been getting ready for you all my life; and now—why now I've found you, don't send me away—with—without you!"

Somehow, he got round to the other side of the table, and knelt there, his big blue eyes looking into hers. "Kitty, I love you. I couldn't go through another week like this and live. It's worse than being in the great lone lands without any tucker."

"Tucker!"

"Yes—grub, you know. Kitty, dearest Kitty, I can't tell you how much I love you. It would take up all the rest of my life."

She could feign indifference no longer, but thrilled to him in measureless content. "You are so strong," she said. "So strong. And you've never—never—cared for any other girl?"

"I've tried hard to care for a few," said Mr. Biggs, with naïve simplicity; "but there was always you waiting for me somewhere, and there it ended. Somehow, they complained I always used both hands driving."

"Used both hands! I don't understand."

He showed her what he ought to have done with the other hand—and arm—on such occasions, then fished out of his pockets half-a-dozen little packets. "It was the only way I could comfort myself," he explained.

"What was?"

"Monday, I ran up to town for diamonds; Tuesday, it was emeralds; Wednesday, rubies; Thursday, opals; Friday, sapphires and turquoises. Now, we'll see if they fit."

"Are you mad? These" (she looked at the beautiful gems) "must have cost hundreds of pounds."

"They did cost a bit," admitted Mr. Biggs. "I told them I wanted the best in the shop because they were for the prettiest girl in the world."

"But," said the bewildered Kitty, "I don't care for these things."

"Very well, we'll chuck them in the river." Mr. Biggs promptly began to gather up the cases. "I might have known I didn't know enough to get the right things."

Kitty stayed his hand. "Ah, there's one I'd forgotten. It cost only ten dollars," he

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said; "but, somehow, I liked it better than all the others."

He produced a lovely little gold ring and touched a spring. When the ring flew open, it showed two clasped hands.

Kitty gave a cry of joy. "Yes, that's better, more real," she said, trying it on. "It fits perfectly."

"Now we've cleared that up," Mr. Biggs declared, with a sigh of relief, "we'd better get on to the secret."

"Stop a moment. Will it pain you to tell me? I know it can be nothing bad because," she added delightedly, "you couldn't by any possibility do anything that was not perfectly upright and noble and——"

"Go on. I've had my eyes shut for such a long time."

"How *did* I worry along without you all these years?" asked the enraptured Mr. Biggs. "No, I didn't do anything 'cept to take a name that didn't belong to me. My name isn't 'Biggs'—not rightly."

"Oh, I'm so glad. I'm sure you've a lovely name. Tell it to me at once. I want to hear what it sounds like."

"I can't remember all of it." He fished in his pockets again, and brought out a slip of paper. "Oh, here it is."

"Can't remember?"

"No; you wouldn't either if you had a string of names as long as a rattlesnake. Now, shut your eyes and don't faint, and I'll read it out slowly and carefully so that you shan't miss any of it. You don't meet with a name like this every day. Now then. Eyes shut?"

"Ye—es, if you'll hold my hand."

"That's all right. You bet I will. First comes Algernon——"

"'Algernon!'"

"Fitzwilliam——"

"'Fitzwilliam!'"

"Simon——"

"'Simon'! Oh no, I don't like 'Simon.'"

"It's on the list, so we must have it; it may help me to bear the others. What do you think of Roslyn?"

"'Roslyn'! That's lovely."

"Yes, I thought you'd like that. Clarence——"

"'Clarence!' Any more?"

"Lots. Yards. Hilary——"

"'Hilary!' That's a sweet name. Are you sure you're called Hilary?"

"Certain sure. Then there's Vernon ——"

"'Vernon!' It isn't a joke?"

"Dead earnest. If you'd got your lovely eyes open, you'd see that a man with all these names wouldn't dare to joke. St. Aubyn——"

"'St. Aubyn!' You've been reading novels."

"Not a novel. My names, take them 'by and large,' will lay over the names in any novel that ever was written. Carruthers——"

"Oh, this is too much. I could have believed everything but 'Carruthers.' Go on. I've had my eyes shut for such a long time."

"Manyrs——"

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"'Manyrs.' With an 'o' or a 'y'?"

"With a 'y.' Now don't scream, but keep quite cool and perfectly quiet. We're coming to the last and best!"

"I—I won't scream. At least, I'll try not to."

"Manyrs, twenty-fifth Earl of Sandilands; that's all."

She opened her eyes and looked at him affrightedly. "You're not joking?"

"Not a joke."

"Oh!" Kitty turned white, took the little gold ring off her finger, and handed it back to him. "Why did you do this?"

He put the ring on again. "Because I didn't want to frighten you. I knew you'd despise me if I said I was an earl. God's given you to me to love and cherish and worship; and it will go mighty hard with the man who tries to take you from me."

"You are so strong! Earl, go on worshipping while I make up my mind what to call you."

He again got out the list, and she selected a name. After all, "Hilary" seemed to be the simplest.

"There'll be a row when your father comes back; he'll reckon I've been getting the bulge on him," said the Earl; "but I made him promise not to give me away."

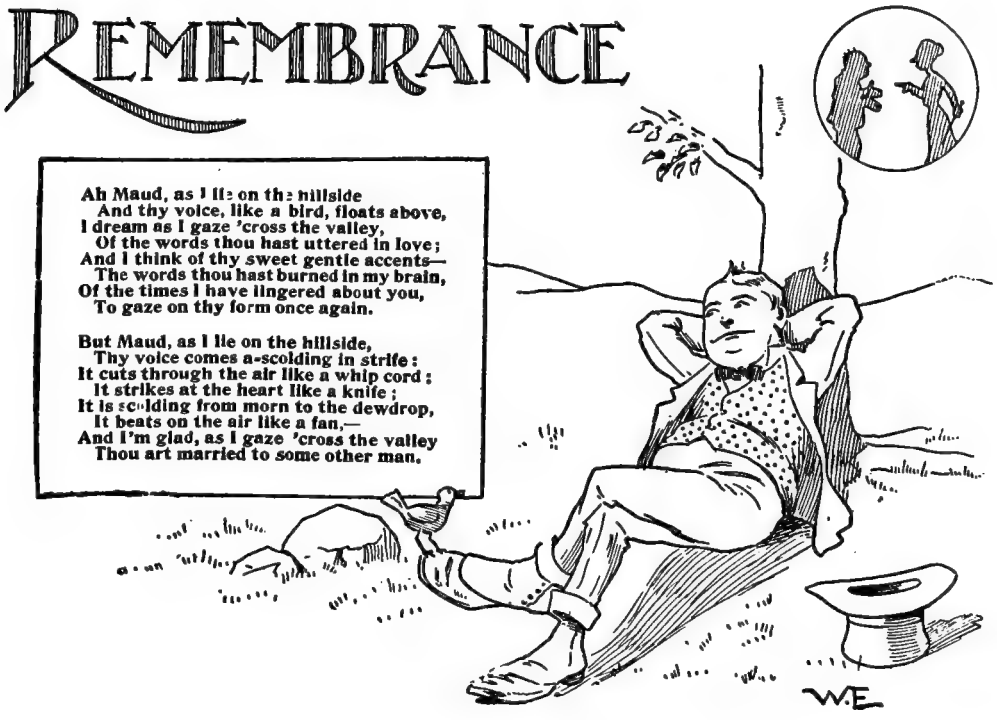
"It is generally the—the bride who is given away," she murmured. "S-s-sh! They're back again. And that mayonnaise is only just begun. Father, dear, Hilary wants to—to speak to you."

"And you, too, mother," said Hilary. "Bless your dear white head."

Of course, Mr. Burnside said things. What would they think of him at the bank for bringing down a client to marry his daughter! And so on, until he was tired. To which, when Mr. Burnside had finished, the Earl replied that he would get a six-shooter and "clear out" the bank, if that was the only objection. Besides, he was "darned hungry," and wanted the matter settled at once, so that he could get married in a day or two.

The lunch party was a very happy one.

REMEMBRANCE


Ah Maud, as I lie on the hillside
And thy voice, like a bird, floats above,
I dream as I gaze 'cross the valley,
Of the words thou hast uttered in love;
And I think of thy sweet gentle accents—
The words thou hast burned in my brain,
Of the times I have lingered about you,
To gaze on thy form once again.
But Maud, as I lie on the hillside,
Thy voice comes a-scolding in strife:
It cuts through the air like a whip cord;
It strikes at the heart like a knife;
It is scolding from morn to the dewdrop,
It beats on the air like a fan,—
And I'm glad, as I gaze 'cross the valley
Thou art married to some other man.
W.E.

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The Many Queer Ways in which Some People are Compelled to Spend Christmas.

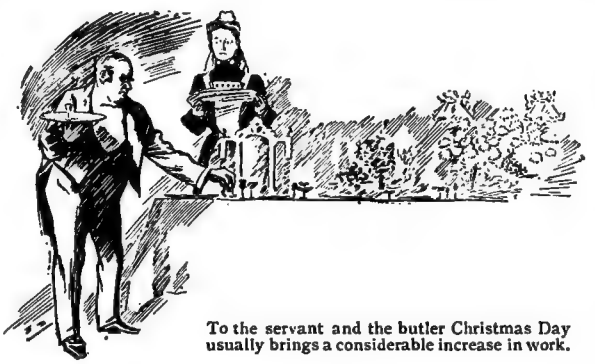
By Bertram Stower.

By the majority of people Christmas Day is regarded as essentially a time of holiday-making. True it is that we may have innumerable worries, yet even the most careworn feels his heart made lighter by the general good-fellowship that this season awakens.

Work, in the opinion of most of us, is out of the question. If we cannot completely scatter care to the winds, the very least we can do is to set aside all work.

Not any doubt exists that this is the light in which the majority of people regard Yuletide. Still there is a minority, and a minority, too, that numbers in its ranks many hundreds of thousands, that cannot possibly view Christmas in this fashion.

Far from no work at all, the advent of Christmas actually means a heavy increase in their duties. Take, for instance, the postman. To him the Twenty-fifth and the several days preceding it herald in the arrival of huge quantities of Christmas-cards and presents. His task increases doubly. Instead of the ordinary three or four times a day round of delivery, he is compelled to make twice the number of journeys before the mass of correspondence and parcels destined for his district is exhausted.



To the servant and the butler Christmas Day usually brings a considerable increase in work.

The postman is by no means the only one on whom the coming of Christmas brings increased work. There are the servants in thousands of British homes. Most of them, no doubt, will have very much more work than ordinarily to do at Christmas. On the cook will fall the task of preparing many fancy dishes, and on the housemaid, or butler, the laying and decorating of the table in a vastly more elaborate fashion. And added to this there are usually friends and relations staying in the house, all of which add to the servants' labours.

The scullery-maid has, perhaps, the worst time of all. She commences Christmas Day by rising at half-past five in the morning. Nothing like making a long day of it, you will say. But wait! At six (imagine six o'clock on Christmas morning, of all times in the world!) she goes downstairs and commences scrubbing the servants' hall. Having finished this she seizes the opportunity of obtaining a little fresh air by cleaning the front doorstep.

Her next mode of whiling away the hours on Christmas Day consists of making ready breakfast for the servants. Then follows a delightful half-hour cleaning the kitchen. And they say cleanliness is next to godliness. So, what more can Louisa want?

Still Christmas Day is not allowed to appear slow to the poor little scullery-maid. Two o'clock will soon be striking and the servants' dinner has to be prepared—potatoes to peel, pots to clean, coals to put on the fire, the table to spread. And all this has to be done in a very short while.

Well, it is five o'clock before she has a chance to rest. So for one whole hour the scullery-maid does absolutely nothing but

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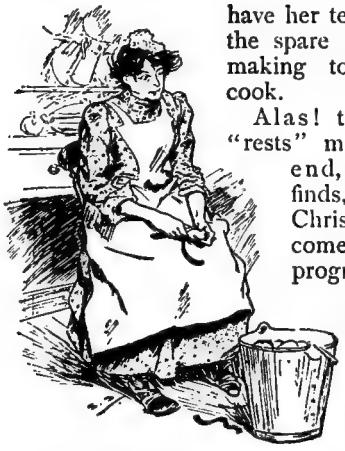

To the scullery-maid Christmas is anything but a holiday.

have her tea, and fill in the spare moments by making toast for the cook.

Alas! the longest "rests" must have an end, so Louisa finds, for the big Christmas dinner comes next on the programme, and more potatoes have now to be peeled, and saucepans to be cleaned.

At last all is finished, the turkey has gone into the room, and the cook is taking a rest; so nothing more remains for the scullery-maid to do but to spread the table for the servants' supper.

Wearied and aching in every limb, she sits down to her Christmas dinner at half-past nine, finishes it in half-an-hour, then goes to bed, devoutly thankful that Christmas is ended.

Some may have seen the policeman patrolling his beat on Christmas Day. Perhaps, they may have imagined that he was out for a constitutional. But ask him! He will quickly delude you of this idea. There is someone else, besides himself, who is very much on duty—the burglar. Christmas is just the time when the housebreaker indulges in a little "Santa Clausing," whilst those in the house are enjoying their Christmas dinner. So the policeman sometimes has a very exciting, although not exactly enjoyable, day.

"'Christmas comes but once a year,' thank goodness for that," remarked a pianoforte tuner; and he had good cause for saying this.

"To me, and those in my line, it means no end of work. People seem to get everything ready for Christmas Day well beforehand, but the piano. At the last moment it occurs to them that it wants tuning. Then an urgent letter, sometimes a telegram, is despatched to the pianoforte tuner.

At Christmas-time the policeman has to keep an even sharper look out than usual. For the burglar loves to do a little "Santa Clausing" while everyone is busy with the turkey.

"Now, it would not matter if half-a-dozen or so required my services, but, when on the morning preceding Christmas Eve thirty letters arrive, all most urgent—well!

"Last Christmas, for instance, I was never so busy in all my life. I actually had not a moment to myself.

"Christmas! There was little to remind me of Christmas on that day. Work, work, pianos innumerable to tune, that was the order of the day.

"True, at one house I was offered wine and biscuits, and greeted with a 'Merry Christmas' by a client overjoyed at my turning up to attend to her piano on *such* a day.

"But even that did not go far to reduce the discomforts of a long day of hard work, and a cold drive home in the early hours of Boxing Day."

To those whose mission in life is to alleviate the sufferings of the sick, Christmas Day is often spent in journeying from one bed of suffering to the other. Although the greater part of England is holiday-making, the evil genius, sickness, is hard at work. Neither day nor night, holiday-time or no holiday-time, can the doctor call his own. Even in the midst of his Christmas dinner, when his family is gathered around the table, an urgent summons may arrive. Some poor woman has been stricken with bronchitis. No time must be lost if her life is to be saved.

The doctor hastily leaves the room. A few minutes later he returns, and, bidding a cheery good-bye to the merry-makers, whose spirits are considerably damped by the interruption, he leaves his brilliantly-lighted dining-room and starts out into the darkness on his mission of mercy.

Conjure up the scene; perhaps his practice is in the country. His coachman is at home, enjoying his Christmas, so, instead of driving, the doctor journeys on foot along the dark lanes, muddy and puddle-strewn. If there is no drizzling rain to beat against his face, the air is foggy. A cheerless outlook!

Let's follow him this Christmas night. Watch him knocking at the little cottage door. See the door open and the rugged face of the farm labourer lighten as he recognises the man who has forsaken Christmas dinner, warmth, and many comforts,

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and trudged on foot a full two miles, to soothe the sufferings of a poor woman!

From the doctor to the engine-driver is a far jump. Nevertheless, they are fellows in bondage on Christmas Day.

So when you are gathered around the fire, your face half-scorched by the fierce though delightful heat, think of the engine-driver.

Of course, many trains discontinue running on Christmas Day, but some must make their long journey across miles and miles of country as they do on ordinary occasions.

With eyes and mind fully occupied in watching passing signals, or glancing at the water-gauge, or reducing speed as the long train sweeps round a curve, the driver has few thoughts to give to Christmas.

Perhaps the bitter wind that whistles through the engine box causes him to envy those countless numbers who have no hardships to face on this great day, and nothing but pleasure in store for them.

His lot is shared with the fireman, who throughout the long run, at short intervals, throws great shovelfuls of coal into the furnace. Scorched one minute by the intense heat escaping through the open furnace door, the fireman is the next instant half-frozen as he shuts out the roaring blaze.

Christmas it may be to some, but to these men not Christmas, in the regarded sense of the word. And with them, too, must be included the guards, ticket-collectors, porters, signal-box operators, and other officials of the line.

Have you ever thought, while you are eating your Christmas dinner, of what is happening in a great workhouse?

Picture to yourself the scene. Long tables lined with aged faces, some with knowledge of a better past, but all wearing a smile—the smile of happiness.

A feeling of comradeship has communicated itself to the officials. They do not pause to think that to-day their work is doubly hard, apart from the fact that they are deprived of spending Christmas with their families.

With a cheery word and a smile for all they enter on their task—no light task either, carving for four or five hundred hungry beings.

At first all goes merrily. "Give them plenty to-day.—We have a lot left.—Put an extra slice there," someone cheerily remarks as an official is about to rush off with a large dish of meat.

Suddenly one cries out: "Good gracious, we've forgotten Ward 10!"

"Work, work, pianos innumerable to tune. That is what Christmas means to me," said the pianoforte tuner.

Will there be sufficient beef to satisfy all? That is the officials' worry.

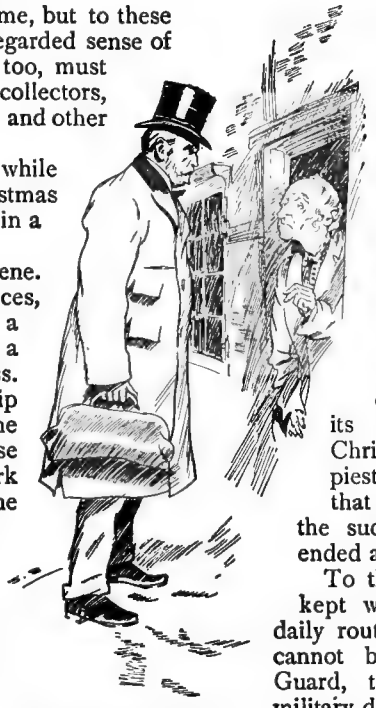
Long before all corners of the vast dining hall are fed Christmas Day is drawing to a close.

A sigh of relief slips from the wearied workers' lips. They have been serving food for five hours, with never a moment to snatch a morsel for themselves.

Now the inmates, young and aged, are gathered around the fires. The officials serve tobacco to the men. Oh, happy Christmas Day that brings to them such luxuries! A hundred women are brewing tea and gossiping as fast as their tongues will work.

Young and old, big and small, weak and strong, are all made happy. For what care they for to-morrow with its dull routine? To-day is Christmas, the brightest and happiest day in the year—the day that flies too quickly—and with the sudden clanging of a bell is ended as the clock strikes eight.

To the soldier Christmas Day is kept with high revelry. But the daily routine, although much relaxed, cannot be dispensed with entirely. Guard, that most cheerless of all military duties in time of peace, must be kept with as much regularity as on other days.



Sickness is abroad even at Christmas, and the doctor sometimes spends the whole day in visiting the sick.

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With eyes and mind fully occupied, watching passing signals, the engine-driver has few thoughts to give to Christmas.

Perhaps the greatest irony of fate is that of keeping guard at Windsor Castle on Christmas Day. Outside is the Castle, cold and cheerless. Within, visions of the luxuriously appointed rooms, of every comfort, rise up before the sentries.

To those soldiers to whom the duty of relieving the guard that has been on "sentry go" throughout the whole of Christmas Eve is assigned, the great day commences at seven. At that hour they rise, and set about cleaning their uniforms and accoutrements.

Presently the bugle sounds the "Quarters" for parade. The men on duty hastily don their uniforms, and, by the time the "five minutes" has sounded form up on parade.

After inspection, the band strikes up, and away they march that Christmas morning to the Castle. There they form up in front of the old guard. Now follows the usual ceremony of "changing the guard," and the handing over of the Castle keys.

Keeping guard on Christmas Day differs in no way from that of other days. The only enjoyment the men obtain is in gathering around the fire telling each other Christmas yarns between the times when they are not on "sentry go."

Sooner or later, each man has to leave the comforting warmth, and pace up and down with measured tread for two, long, weary hours.

It is not a very cheering prospect of spending Christmas Day. And the thoughts of what a good time their comrades are having in barracks, makes the guard bemoan his lot the more.

Should the sentry happen to be posted in the cloisters of St. George's Chapel his eyes meet nothing but white stone tablets. In truth, he is pacing up and down a graveyard. Cheery work this, when darkness steals over all and nothing but the sepulchral sound of his footsteps relieves the stillness.

In this way the sentry does his two hours' "guard" on Christmas Day, thinking the while of the "old folk at home," and longing for the time to come when he can slip back to the fire, with a four hours' rest before his next turn comes round.

So far I have only spoken of the doings of those that live ashore on Christmas Day. It is obvious to all that the sailors on the great liners and trading vessels cannot bank furnaces, cast anchor, and discontinue all work on Christmas Day

As far as work is concerned, Christmas Day is similar in every respect to any other day. The rations served to the men before the mast include some of little delicacies that custom has made a part of Christmas.

With the sailor must be included the lighthouse-keeper. His lot is infinitely less agreeable. Often stationed several miles out at sea in a lonely lighthouse, with only a couple of assistant keepers for company, he finds but little pleasure in Christmas. He dare not venture ashore. His duty is always near the lamp. At all costs it must burn brightly at night, and should a sudden mist obscure its beams, the fog-horn must be sounded constantly.

Now, should you be awake at four o'clock on Christmas morning you can while away the time by thinking of the lighthouse-men.

At that hour one of the keepers rises and relieves his comrade on watch in the great lantern.

To the lonely man the time passes slowly, the lamp burns steadily, the sky is clear and star-lit, yet his presence is absolutely necessary.

Far out at sea the great Atlantic liners pass, taking their course from the bright revolving light. Imagine the fearful consequences that would arise were the lighthouse men to spend Christmas Day ashore!

Alert to all that is around, and

Carving and serving dinner to a hundred hungry souls—this is the way that workhouse officials spend their Christmas Day.

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watching carefully the lights of passing ships, the solitary man in the lantern has plenty of time to think. And Christmas is naturally uppermost in his thoughts. He calls to mind the years when he spent Christmas Day ashore. Pictures of the happy time rise up before him.

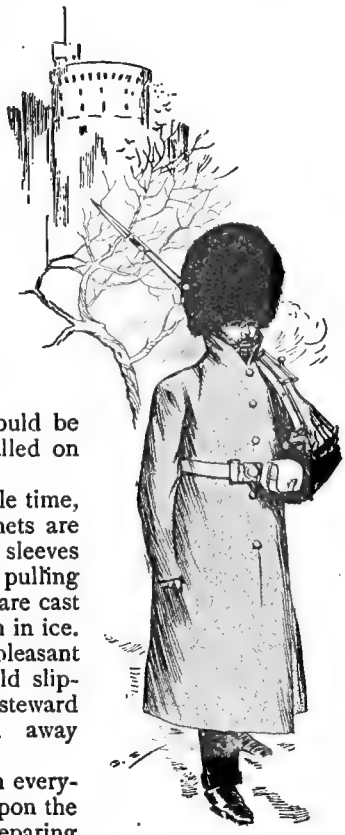
Slowly in the east the sun rises. The lighthouse-man turns out the lamp. Its warning light is no longer needed. But even now he has not completed his watch, and four long weary hours must pass before he is relieved.

I wonder what our readers would think were they destined to spend their Christmas on a North Sea trawler? Imagine awakening on a Christmas in a bunk in a dingy little cabin! The smell of fish is around. There are soles cooking in the galley—your Christmas breakfast.

This was the way a certain steward on board a steam trawler frequently spends Christmas Day.

At three in the morning, the time when nobody should be abroad except the waits and Santa Claus, all hands are called on deck to haul in the fishing nets.

After tugging at the icy-cold ropes for some considerable time, the splashing and shimmering of fish announces that the nets are nearing the surface. At last they are drawn on board. With sleeves tucked up to the elbows the steward joins in the work of pulling out the struggling fish. Directly the nets are emptied they are cast into the sea again, and everyone sets to work packing the fish in ice.



Guard, that most cheerless of all soldiers' duties in time of peace, has to be kept on Christmas Day.

This is by no means pleasant work. Still, seizing the cold slippery fish in his hands, the steward assists in stowing them away amongst the ice.

The keen air has given everyone an appetite, and now upon the steward falls the task of preparing the Christmas breakfast.

Fish naturally forms the menu. With half-frozen fingers he sorts out a pile of whiting, gurnets, and soles, and carries them down to the galley to cook.

Breakfast over, he next sets to work preparing dinner. They fare well on board this particular trawler, and a goose usually forms the Christmas *pièce de résistance.*

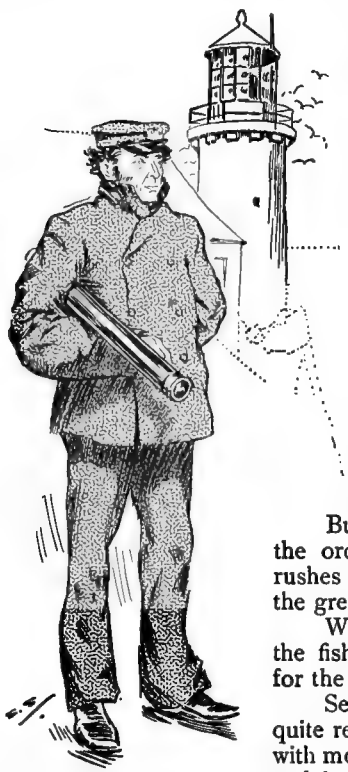
Well, at one o'clock the ship's bell peals out, the steward brings in the goose cooked to perfection and the vegetables too.

Then, when everyone feels that they will never eat again, the mate gets out his concertina, and soon the sound of song and music rise up from below.

But the nets are in the sea, and in the midst of their merriment the order comes to haul the catch aboard. Instantly everyone rushes up the companion-ladder, steward included, and once more the great nets are hauled up alongside.

While the sailors are busily engaged sorting out and packing the fish, the steward returns, and sets shrimps and crabs to boil for the Christmas tea.

Several hours have now passed since dinner, so the sailors feel quite ready for their tea after their cold spell on deck. Afterwards, with more songs and Christmas carols, the hours fly only too quickly, and by the time ten o'clock has struck on the ship's bell they are once more on deck, hauling in the last catch of the day. Thus Christmas ends on board a North Sea trawler.



Like the sentry the lighthouse-men, stationed on and off the coast, must be on watch.

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Real Life Romances.

The Editor is Pleased to Consider True, Out-of-the-Way Experiences.

With Bow and Arrow.

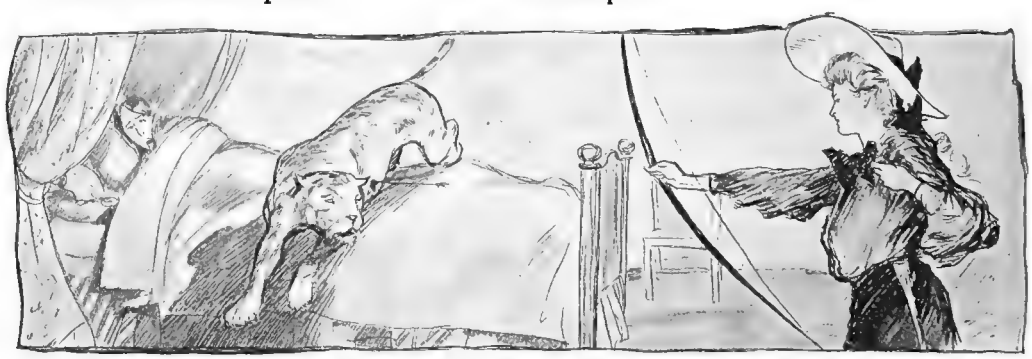
THE STORY OF A GIRL'S COURAGE.

THE heroine of this story has figured before in a ROYAL romance. She is a pretty American girl, by name Beulah Thorne.

One day Beulah was returning from a long ramble. In her hand she carried a bow, whilst fastened by a leathern belt to her side hung a quiver full of arrows. Playfully sending a shaft with unerring aim into a small straw target that hung from a tree, she entered the house.

"How quiet everything seems," she thought, feeling strangely nervous. "Mother!" she called. "Mother, where are you?"

But there was no response.



The bow straightened, and swift to its mark the arrow flew.

A vague presentiment that something was amiss assailed her.

Filled with apprehension, the girl rushed to the front room, threw open the door, and glanced inside. No one was there.

A thought came to her. Perhaps her mother was ill. Hastening upstairs she silently opened the door of her mother's room and peeped inside.

Then Beulah gasped. Her heart almost ceased beating at the horrible sight before her. There, lying peacefully on the big bed fast asleep, she saw her mother—with a huge jaguar standing over her.

Petrified with horror, the girl remained motionless. The yellow eyes of the disturbed animal glared furiously at her. Its cruel lips curled and an ominous snarl broke from it.

Her mother sighed, moving slightly in her sleep. Instantly the jaguar looked down, and snarled savagely at the slumbering woman.

As in a dream the girl looked on, still holding the bow in her hand, and breathlessly expecting every minute to see the long white fangs of the fierce animal plunge into her mother's throat.

With a great effort she roused herself. Her courage returned. A warm glow succeeded the icy coldness that had assailed her during the last two minutes. Now her brain was clear. She realised that something must be done, and done quickly, too, if it were to be done at all. But what?

She dare not steal downstairs and fetch the gun that always hung loaded over the mantelpiece.

Somehow it seemed to her that so long as she remained motionless the jaguar would not harm her mother.

An idea crept into the girl's mind. Would not one of her flint-headed arrows kill the brute? But she must aim unerringly. A bad shot, and the jaguar, smarting with the wound, would tear the sleeper to pieces.

Now the brute was sniffing at the throat of its unconscious victim. Another moment, and its mouth would be stained with blood.

Quickly placing an arrow in the bow, and stretching the leathern cord to its fullest, the girl took aim. An involuntary prayer escaped her lips as she released the cord.

With a sharp snap the bow straightened, and swift to its mark the arrow flew. The jaguar leaped high in the air, then rolled on to the floor shot through the heart.

Then, casting bow and quiver to the ground, the thankful girl rushed to the bedside, and, throwing her arms around her mother's neck, broke into tears of joy.

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When Memory Fails.

A SCOTCH WOMAN'S AWFUL EXPERIENCE.

One Saturday evening towards the close of August, a Scotch woman had just finished her marketing. Before returning, she decided to call on her sister.

Having stayed there talking for some little time, she set out for her home.

As, carrying her basket under her arm, she hurried homewards, a strange feeling came over her. She tried to think; but no thoughts would frame themselves in her mind. The world had suddenly become blank. She could see, but she did not know what she saw. Even her own name—her very existence—whether she was married or not—had entirely vanished from her mind. Only one desire remained—she must go forward; whither she neither knew nor cared, so long as she was moving.

Walking without reason, oblivious to all that was around her, her footsteps led her to the moors.

At times she stumbled, and often fell, bruising herself severely. She was conscious of the pain arising from these mishaps; but the mad, single impulse to move forward proved too strong.

Through her awful wanderings a fearful thirst consumed her. From every brook or spring that crossed her path she stooped and took deep draughts.

So far all her actions had appeared as hidden in a haze.

Sometimes she was conscious that night had set in. But darkness was no resting time for her. Her body had acquired an energy that never tired—the feverish energy of a distraught mind.

One morning she heard a man's voice calling on the moors. The voice sounded familiar—like that of her husband's uncle. She raised her head to give an answering cry.

But during the time she had roamed on the lonely moors, never uttering a word, nor hearing one spoken until this moment, her voice had lost its strength.

And the man disappeared across the moor, unconscious of the distressed woman's presence.

From this moment a sudden change began to work in her mind. She felt her memory returning.

Day by day, things became clearer, until, early one morning, she felt convinced that she was near her sister's house.

The long days of wandering had almost exhausted her strength. She could no longer walk. Crawling on hands and knees, she neared the house.

At the garden gate a thought occurred to her—by now her relations would have given her up as dead.

Crawling on hands and knees, she neared the house.

Her sudden appearance would startle them from their sleep.

She would wait for them to rise. What mattered an hour or two to her, now that she had been away so long?

So, lying on the ground, the poor woman waited until she saw her sister moving in the room below.

Then, staggering to her feet, she knocked timidly on the door.

* * * * *

Great was the rejoicing in that little cottage at the return of her whom all regarded long ago as dead.

As the poor woman's husband listened to her tale of suffering, the tears trickled down his furrowed cheeks.

Then he spoke, and told of the long days that he had spent searching in vain the lonely moors; how the harbour had been dragged, the river, too; and how, at last, he had despairingly resigned all hope, and mourned for her as dead.

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Through the smoke loomed a strange creature . . . . carrying . . . . a little night-clad figure!

Saved by a Dog.

HOW A DOG RESCUED A LITTLE CHILD FROM A FIRE.

It was midnight. The little Swiss town of St. Saphorin lay slumbering. Not a soul was abroad to notice a certain house from which the blue smoke curled.

Within the burning house a father, a mother, and three young children lay sleeping.

An ominous crackling succeeded the silent outpouring of the smoke. The woodwork was ablaze.

A horrified man sat up in bed. With eyes outstaring, he tried to penetrate the darkness. He caught sight of a small glow that issued from beneath the door.

He awoke his wife, and, endeavouring to hide his awful fear, quickly explained the danger. Then, bidding her await his return, he opened the door and disappeared into a dense cloud of smoke.

A moment later he had entered his children's bedroom. Groping his way to a cot he seized the youngest child in one arm, whilst with the other he threw his little daughter, dazed and scarcely awake, over his shoulder.

And now came the terrible journey down the already burning stairs. But help was at hand, for just as they reached the bottom of the stairs the front door was burst open, and the half-suffocated family staggered into the street.

Suddenly, a piteous cry broke from the mother. Heavens! where was little Henri? Her little four-year-old boy lay sleeping in the burning house! An exclamation of horror escaped the father.

He looked around him helplessly. Just then his retriever trotted up to him. Its faithful brown eyes, gazing trustfully up into his master's face sent a wild thought through the distracted man's mind.

"Go, fetch Henri!" he said, pointing to the burning house.

Would the dog go? On him alone hung Henri's life. A second the handsome creature hesitated, then, trotting forward, was swallowed in the thick smoke.

A minute went by—one terrible minute in which the anxious parents stood, hoping with the hope of despair. Then through the smoke there loomed a strange creature. Could this hairless, black animal be the handsome retriever? It must be he! But how he staggered. Surely he was carrying something—a little night-clad figure!

A cry burst from the mother. She rushed forward and snatched her baby to her arms—saved by a faithful dog.

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An Unlucky Christmas Day.

A POLICEMAN'S ADVENTURE.

Towards a distant range of mountains an Irish constable was wending his way. The time was midday last Christmas.

That morning information had been brought that in a lonely cabin on the mountain-side an illicit still was in full operation.

A two hours' walk brought him to his destination. Without further ado, the constable threw his weight against the door and forced an entrance. A hasty inspection convinced him that his information was correct.

In the centre of the cabin stood the still. A large cupboard attracted his attention. He threw it open. Instantly three masked men leapt upon him. Outnumbered, and attacked on all sides, the officer was speedily borne to the ground and bound hand and foot.

Furious at the discovery of their misdoings, the men now vented their rage upon the unfortunate constable. Then one tauntingly wished him a "Merry Christmas," and declared that he must drink their health.

The leader approached his victim. In his hand he held a cup, filled to the brim with proof whisky.

"Drink!" he commanded, holding the cup to the constable's lips.

The unfortunate man shook his head and closed his lips more firmly.

Filled with anger, the ruffian forced open the constable's mouth and poured the fiery liquid down his throat.

Ten minutes later, an unconscious form lay on the floor.

Slowly, Christmas Day sank into Christmas night, and midnight was drawing near when two constables stepped into the room.

The bright glare of their lanterns flashed in his face aroused the stupefied man. He stared around him vacantly. Then, very slowly, the whole of that terrible Christmas Day came back to him.

Whilst his rescuers were cutting the thongs, he began to explain what had happened. He had discovered the still. It was there behind——

The constables glanced around, then both looked at him suspiciously.

"There is no still here," one said.

Then the whole truth dawned on the luckless constable.

The ruffians had made good their escape whilst he lay unconscious, taking with them the still and everything that was likely to give proof of what the place had once been!

"Drink!" he commanded.

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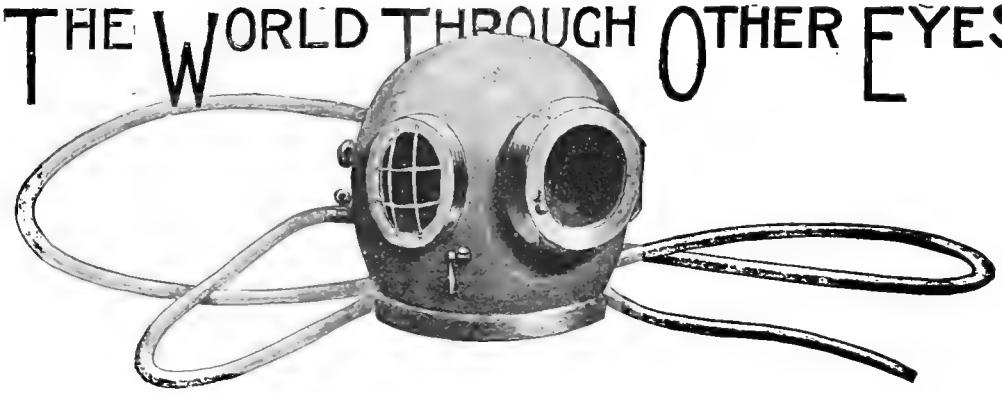
THE WORLD THROUGH OTHER EYES



No. X.—FROM THE DEEP SEA DIVER'S POINT OF VIEW.

In this Article, the Tenth of this Remarkable Series, the Diver Describes his Sensations on Descending into the Depths of the Sea, and the Weird Sights he Meets there.

By Walter Wood.

The dangerous work accomplished by the diver in recovering treasure from the sea, in raising sunken ships, in laying the foundation stones of lighthouses and breakwaters, and in countless other ways, has been frequently described. But his sensations as he slowly dons his armour-like costume, and very cautiously descends sometimes to the amazing depth of over one hundred and ninety feet, have, hitherto, never been touched upon.

In this article I intend to recount my personal experiences, and the sensations that thrilled me on descending into the depths of the sea, and to describe some of the unearthly sights that met my eyes.

The extraordinary and unattractive apparatus in which I am about to intrust myself beneath the deep waves lies conveniently at hand. All is ready. I take off my hat, my coat, and my boots, sit down, and deliver myself over completely to the "signalman," who for this occasion is my dresser. By what subtle process of reasoning do I draw a comparison between my own case and that of the condemned man who is claimed by the executioner?

There is no answer to the unbidden question, because time presses, and the signalman, silent, quick, a very expert in the delicate art of attiring those who go down to the sea in diving-suits, is holding in his hands a thick white hand-knitted woollen stocking. This, with its fellow, is drawn over my own socks and tucked-in trousers.

Then comes another pair, thicker and longer, and a third follows. It seems absurd, unnecessary, and burdensome; but this is only the beginning of things—the foundation and groundwork of the complete diving kit.

The dresser leaves the extremities and goes to the body. Over the head he draws a heavy white guernsey; over that he pulls a second, differing from the first only in weight, this being heavier; then comes a pair of drawers, succeeded by another pair, and a final crust, so to speak, of stocking—great heavy pieces of handwork such as North Sea smacksmen wear.

There is a finishing buttoning-up before the assumption of the actual diving-dress, an uncanny garment which is body, legs, and feet all in a piece, and has the singular merit of fitting equally well a man of either five feet six or six feet five. It is a wonderful suit of solid sheet india-rubber placed between specially prepared double-tanned twill, and fitted with tapering vulcanised india-rubber cuffs. These cuffs are so made that they form a watertight joint at the wrists, and before they can be mastered the hands must be well soaped.

The dress is provided with a double collar, the inner one of waterproof twill for tying round the neck, and the outer one of thick vulcanised rubber. This rubber has a dozen holes corresponding with twelve screws on the breastplate to which it is fitted.

A red woollen cap, like the flaming headdress of the jovial brewer's drayman at a cart-horse parade, is put on, a great leather

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belt is fastened round my body, and I am ready for the crowning touches of the dresser's skilful hands.

Now I have reached the stage at which nervousness, if it comes at all, arises, for a breastplate is put over my shoulders and firmly clamped to the rubber top of the dress, to make it absolutely watertight. The screws are turned down by hand as far as they will go, then firmly clinched with a spanner. This breastplate is so shaped that it comfortably fits my shoulders, and gives my arms perfect freedom for work and the vitally important task of manipulating the air-valves of the helmet when under water. It is fitted with brass tabs for the support of two lead weights, one in front and one at the back.

I am being gradually sealed up, and only my head is left exposed, my hands, of course, being free and untrammelled and unprotected. At last I get, by elephantine waddling, from my dressing-room to the edge of the water, and there become seated until my fin-like feet are put into enormous boots of leather, gunmetal, wood, and lead. Each sole is of lead, and the total weight of the boot is 16lb.—32lb. for the pair. It is my pedal ballast.

The crucial moment has arrived—the time for putting on the helmet, which is the most wonderful part of this amazing kit. The helmet, like the breastplate, is made of highly planished tinned copper, with gunmetal fittings, by means of which it is connected with the breastplate, and made perfectly watertight in a second or two with only one-eighth of a turn. It has two side oval thick plate glasses in brass frames, and in front is a brass frame which is made to screw in and out. The helmet is also fitted with air-conductors from the inlet valves, which carry the air over the three glasses, and entirely prevent them from becoming condensed by the diver's breath. Consequently, they are always quite clear—a matter of the first importance for subaqueous work.

At the back of the helmet there is a gunmetal inlet valve, to which the air-pipe is connected, so ingeniously constructed that air can enter the helmet, but cannot possibly return or escape; indeed, so perfect is the contrivance that in case of accident to pump or air-pipe, the helmet will hold enough air to permit me to reach the surface safely, even from a great depth.

Two oppressive pads of lead, each weighing 40lb., are fastened to my breastplate tabs—one on my chest and one on my back, and each is secured with a cord to maintain it in position. The great life-line is put round my waist, over my belt, and this and the air-pipe are made fast in such a way that they cannot get foul of each other when I am submerged.

One thing more, and one thing only, remains to be done—that is, the screwing home of the front glass. The dresser approaches with the glass in hand, and with a dexterous turn or two he has placed it in position and turned it firmly round. It is suggestive of a dentist's triumphant frontal attack.

Again there is an unbidden, unwelcome, involuntary mental vision—this time of an undertaker and his last screw.

I am now absolutely cut off from the outside air, buried alive in a wondrous garb of the finest workmanship and most enormous strength; my outlook is through a thick glass window of small size, exactly like the porthole of a ship.

For one or two brief seconds I have a wild desire for freedom, an overwhelming foreboding of evil and disaster, a wholesome, natural, and human dread and hatred of being helplessly caged and entombed; but I have given my word that when the signal-tap on my helmet top is made by the chief diver I will descend.

The signal comes as soon as the front glass is screwed home, and simultaneously with it is a thudding sound, which is twin to my own heart-beats—longish-dull, short-sharp. It is another heart, in very truth, the pumping into the helmet of the air; and if it stops—but the thought goes as swiftly as it has come, because I know that this air-pipe which is feeding me from the pump ashore is made of the most perfect workmanship throughout, and has been already tested to a pressure of 200lb. to the square inch—infinitely more than any strain which will be put upon it because of my descent.

I recollect, too—and the thought is indescribably comforting and cheering—that Messrs. Siebe, Gorman, and Co. supply the whole of the ships of the Royal Navy, and practically the entire world of underwater operators, with diving apparatus, and that in the whole of their long record they have never lost a life through defective workmanship.

As I drag my leaden feet towards the ladder which leads into the deep sea, I look upon the world through other eyes indeed, or rather, one eye; because I am a very Polyphemus. A sense of hopeless oppression overpowers me. The clumsy boots pull me down, the huge dress is a burden, the great

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weights on my back and chest bend me like an old man. I feel that if I slip or trip I shall sink like a stone, and that conviction makes me clutch the rungs of the ladder with an unyielding determination not to let go until my feet have found security at each laborious stage in my descent. No sound whatever of the outside world reaches me, although many people are looking on and the air is filled with complex noises.

My weighted feet disappear in the water, and the heaviness instantly and perceptibly decreases. I go deeper, down to the waist, and find that the air from the pump is filling the dress and ballooning me out absurdly. So much is this the case that I have to begin to force myself down, and by the time my head is just below the surface I have literally to pull myself under the water—which I accomplish by putting my feet beneath, instead of on, the rungs of the ladder.

I am in my other world at last.

The waters close over my head, and I become something that is not a human being. I am in a world which is not peopled by men.

There is an all-pervading fogginess and unreality in everything I see and feel; and the general weirdness is intensified by the heart-beat of the air-pipe, which is exactly like the panting of a railway engine that is ready to start. And added to this there is a curious roar--a continuous sound of the escaping air which rushes upward from my helmet-valve.

The fogginess grows as I slowly force myself down, everything is ghostly and distorted; in spite of the thuds and the rushing air sound there is an extraordinary silence—and with it all I am most terribly alone.

Down I go into the deepening darkness, accompanied by that unearthly rush of air and thud of life from the surface. Now strange sensations come over me. There is a roaring and crackling at the ears, a fighting for breath, a panting of the lungs, and a gasping for the outer free and open air; for as a fish does in my own element so I seem to do in his. It is the inevitable result of the pressure of the water upon me. I pause in my descent, make pretence of swallowing, as I have been instructed to do, and slowly climb a rung or two of the ladder.

The oppression vanishes, so, too, do my ballooning tendencies after I have given the valve the merest turn, to allow the excess air to escape. I am able to continue my descent, and at last my ponderous footgear touches the ground which I cannot see—and scarcely feel.

How amazing the sensation is! I expect to walk solidly and easily, with so much weight upon me, and yet I have actually to struggle to keep on my feet at all! I feel for all the world like a child who is being taught to walk must feel—as if two ropes were under my arms, and I am allowed only to touch the ground lightly and buoyantly.

I am in a subaqueous world, and it is as if I had been suddenly given the power of walking in air—but thick opaque air like a dense North Sea fog when I am near the surface, and a black fog when I am on the sea bed.

My field of vision is very limited, and every object is distorted and unreal. There is only my front glass to look through, and the range is very short. To see anything at all well I have to peer through my great eye, and go quite close to the object; then it stands out with astonishing and abrupt distinctness.

This is specially the case with writing on a slate, a performance which is easy, provided the water is not too cold for the hands to hold the slate and pencil. Such is a convenient mode of conversation, but if I want to speak with a fellow diver I place my helmet against his and the words are carried through the adjoining metals.

If I wish to converse with my fellow creatures on the earth I can do it by means of signals on my life-line, if I am using the older form of diving-dress, or by means of a telephone if I am rigged up in the newest suit which Mr. Gorman has invented.

Fishes, bulgy-eyed, ghost-like, float past, seemingly in thick air, crabs, grey, unwholesome, cling to a barnacled mass, and feed their fill; mussels cluster about, and strange mysterious submarine growths, of which I know nothing, are flourishing in the gloomy depths.

But of big, fierce fishes, the monsters of the deep of which imagination tells us, I see nothing, even if I were in the right location for them. It is a peculiarity of the diver's work that the large and rarer marine monsters, such as sharks, do not, as a rule, come near or trouble him, because the air-bubbles from the helmet scare them off. It is the small fry, humanly foolish and inquisitive, which swim up and reconnoitre with uncomprehending stare.

Very soon the depth below me would mean total darkness, but a powerful electric lamp, with two bull's-eyes, illumines the surrounding water with a curiously pink light. Work with knife or other tool is easy,

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This picture shows the exact size of the eye, or porthole, of a diver's helmet. As the diver looks through, he sees many fish, bulgy-eyed and ghost-like, float by. Before him, suffused in a deep-green haze, he discerns the ocean bed, and the seaweed-clad shrouds and hull of a sunken ship.

but the strokes of the arm and grip of the hand lose strangely in strength because of the buoyancy of the water.

I see a brain-grey object in a mass of barnacles. I seize it, and my grasp seems to be that of an infant. My hand closes more firmly on it, and I try to pull it down, with the result that I am swung off my feet and begin to float to the surface. I plunge my hands into the mass of barnacles, and force myself down to the bed of the sea again and walk slowly on, my course being clearly traced on the surface of the water by the bubbles which burst incessantly from the uprush of air.

The sea-bed is invisible, and it is treacherous and uneven. I grope my way along it, sometimes stumbling absurdly against a stone or dipping into a little sandy hollow. And always my great cold eye is looking downward.

Suddenly I am brought up by a slimy barrier of stone which reveals the opening of a dock sluice, a gloomy entrance that is like the maw of a colossal submarine monster which is greedy to swallow me. I stumble into the mouth, and am confronted by an appalling darkness, for this is an under-water tunnel, full of water, fit entrance to caverns

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Through the thick glass peep-hole in his helmet the diver notices his comrade writing upon a slate. Communications between divers are mainly made in this fashion, as the roar of air, rushing into the helmet, precludes all sound. On his left the diver sees the ladder by which he descended to the sea-bed.

that might be measureless to man and lead down to a sunless sea.

A warning and restraining hand is placed upon my own and my guardian chief diver—hero of a descent of 192 feet—steers me back to comparative light and perfect safety. Later I learn that tunnels such as this are not beloved of even experienced divers, from which I deduce that foolish novices stumble in where veterans would rather not penetrate.

Now comes a devil-may-care sensation arising from a sense of growing confidence, and the exhilarating influence of the champagney air which the never ceasing pump is sending down from above. I know that the signalman, too, incessantly watches the air-bubbles and the air-pipe, and holds in his hand the life-line with which, if I care to signal that anything is amiss, I can be hauled speedily to the surface.

"Lie down," writes the chief diver on the slate. "Like me," he adds encouragingly, still with his pencil; and inasmuch as he curls up and settles as comfortably as if he were turning in between blankets, I essay the like achievement, and instantly begin to balloon to the surface, feet first. I clutch a little ledge of rock, and the chief diver lays a restraining arm upon me. These performances, with the ever-present hundredweight of lead with which I am ballasted, enable me clumsily to lie upon the sea-bed and look through my cold glass eye towards the heaven which I cannot see, but which is indicated by a deadly watery greenness.

And as I lie the confidence departs, and I feel, or imagine I feel, the oppression of the enormous weight of water above me. I feel as if I am buried alive in a monstrous mould of green glass. Suppose the air supply fails, suppose I cannot rise, suppose my life-line, which looks strangely festooned like the folds of an encircling serpent, becomes hopelessly entangled; suppose the mud and stones and slime and sand of the sea-bed hold me in a grip that will not relax until too late—these and other vague and unnumbered fears flash through my mind; but they vanish when I resume perpendicularity and grope towards the ladder which leads back to the world above.

Very slowly I ascend, more slowly as I reach the top because of the growing heaviness upon me.

When I am actually clear of the water I find that I can do nothing but stand on a rung and grip the sides of the ladder, for now I am the sole support of the leaden weights, the huge boots, and the heavy diving kit.

At last, with help, I get on land, and instantly, led by some kind and invisible hand, sink, bowed down, on the apparatus chest, which has been placed as a seat. Immediately the weights are removed, and my head and shoulders spring upright; a dexterous turn is given, and my helmet is removed. Involuntarily I take a huge,

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deep, glorious draught of the fresh breeze which comes in salt-laden from the Channel.

I have been glad to descend into the depths, but my feelings, now that I have emerged, are of exultation and thankfulness. It seems an eternity since I was sealed up and screwed up, and began to sink myself, and yet I learn that my submarine trip has not exceeded half-an-hour.

Equipped in the manner I have described, I can do any of the work which comes within a diver's province to accomplish. I can go deeply down—no man has yet got beyond a depth of 204 feet — but the deeper I go the shorter is my stay, for the pressure of the water is so great that the human frame cannot withstand it. At an excessive depth a few minutes only can be endured; but at an average working depth I can remain under water for the diver's full shift of four hours.

During that period I can repair a ship below the water-line, I can lay an explosive charge for rock blasting, I can put blocks in position for harbour or breakwater work, and carry out a hundred different forms of submarine engineering; or I can recover cargo from a sunken wreck — often enough I can, with my fellow divers, raise the wreck itself, and heaven knows what relics of pitiful tragedies with it!

No work which the diver does is more dangerous, more nerve-destroying, and more terrible than that which is concerned with sunken wrecks.

I will pull myself together and descend to the silent gloom in which a one-time floating palace lies embedded in the sand, hard by a reef on which she struck. I am not alone — for such a task as this I shrink from solitude. A chief diver is with me, a man of iron nerve and constitution. The object to be reached is a sunken mail-boat, a fine specimen of the shipbuilder's skill, a work which was produced regardless of cost. Foggy weather and deviation from her course brought her on to the reef and insured her speedy doom. Save for a few passengers and members of her crew, who got clear of her before she foundered, she went down with all hands and cargo.

She lies, broken-backed, with a huge rent in the hull and so badly damaged that it would be waste of time and money to attempt to salve her. But she carried with her a quarter of a million sterling in gold and silver, and it is to recover this precious metal that we are going below.

The descent begins. Above our heads the sky is gloriously blue, flecked with white clouds; the sea is clear and calm. Away on the horizon is the smoke of a steamer—sister ship to the sunken wreck, and carrying laughing, merry, careless passengers to the East.

None of their eyes are turned towards us, but on the bridge, behind the weather-cloth,

To the diver this is the appearance that his comrade presents. As he moves along the bottom of the sea, he seems to be walking in a fairy forest. From the valve in the helmet the air escapes in fast bubbles that rise to the surface and show the men above, working at the pumps, the precise movements of their submerged comrade.

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the officer of the watch is levelling a pair of glasses in our direction, and a hard smile is on his face as he looks below at some of the not overwise passengers who sprawl on the deck.

We go over the stern of a lighter, on which the air-pump and the assistants are stationed, and from which a rope-ladder with iron rounds runs down to the sea-bed exactly alongside the wreck. From the ladder we climb slowly on to the deck, heeling and slippery, and already covered with barnacles and slimy weeds. It is a terrible and depressing spectacle, this lifeless ship at rest in the deep green gloom of the ocean.

We make our way along the silent deck, still slowly, and enter the main saloon—but not beyond the door—for there are forms assembled which appal the stoutest hearts, figures in sleeping garments who have been roused from rest by the crash and grind of the collision, and have reached the exit just as the ship has sunk. We turn back from these portals of death and go past state-rooms into whose intense darkness we do not penetrate, for very dread of the awful sights which will confront us.

The specie-room is amidships, dark even when the steamer was afloat, and only explorable now because of our perfect diving apparatus — an apparatus which includes a telephone running through the life-line, from the helmet, and an electric lamp in the centre of the breastplate.

The friendly light of the lamp suffuses the room and shows the ghostly outlines of the treasure-boxes. One is got clear and pulled away, not a hard task, because of the buoyancy of the water; a rope is made fast round it, the box is got out of the room and swung free of the wreck, and from the helmet goes the message that all is ready. Then the box is hauled up to the surface and taken on board the lighter. Box after box ascends, until the whole of the treasure has been recovered, after many dives and many days.

The weather is fine, the tides and currents are not unfavourable, and the work generally is such that two descents a day, of nearly four hours each, can be made. Nor are the operations disturbed, since our only companions are the silent sleepers who will not wake, and the incurious fish.

The treasure-room is cleared at last and the final box of bullion safely put ashore. But our work is not yet finished. One more thing remains to be accomplished, and that is, the destruction of the wreck. She is beyond hope of repair, even if she were raised, and so our farewell dives are for the purpose of laying charges of dynamite in and about her. At the appointed time, when we have finally ascended and all is clear of the area of danger, the charges are exploded.

There is a long dull roar, a tremendous upheaval of the sea, a great cloud of *débris* and stunned and dead and dying fish, and a settling of the waters. The dynamite has done its work, and the once proud mail-boat is a heap of scattered metal on the sea-bed.

NOTE.—I desire to acknowledge my great indebtedness to Messrs. Siebe, Gorman, and Company, submarine engineers, of Westminster Bridge Road, London, S.E., for their ready help in affording the artist and myself the means of getting the actual diving experience on which the foregoing article and illustrations are based, and particularly to their manager, Mr. R. H. Davis, for furnishing us with some of the firm's most perfect diving apparatus and the friendly help of a chief diver — E. A. Rayfield — with a skilful signalman and assistants.—W. W.

. . READ . .
"The Heart of Things,"
A thrilling series of Articles . now running in . PEARSON'S MAGAZINE, in which Miss Olive Christian Malvery, the well-known lecturer and reciter, describes her experiences whilst living among the poor and destitute of London. She has slept on the Embankment, worked in factories, and peddled matches in the street, and her narrative is full of human interest.

Photo by W. & D. Downey

MISS OLIVE CHRISTIAN MALVERY.

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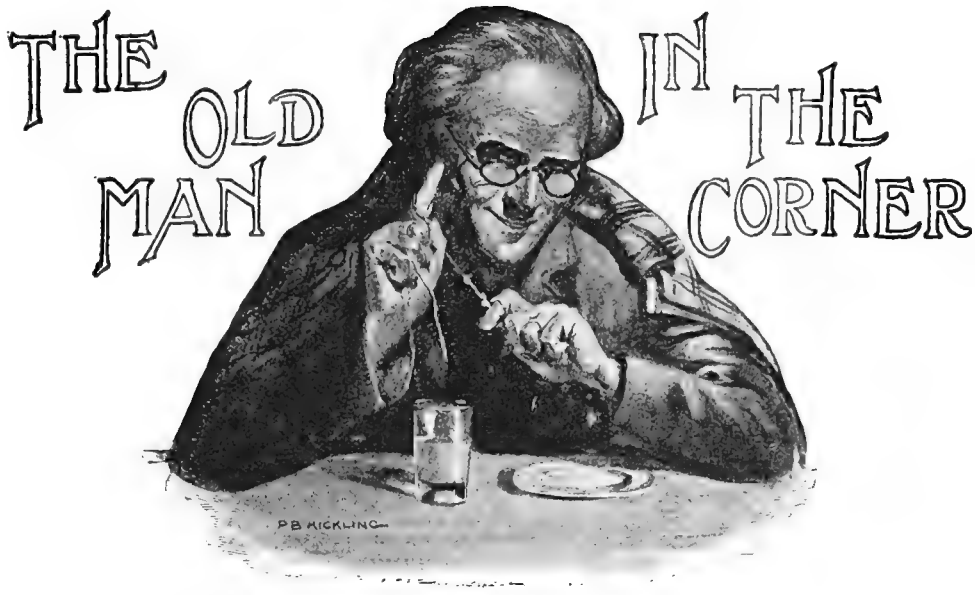

IX.—THE DISAPPEARANCE OF COUNT COLLINI.

By The Baroness Orczy.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Old Man in the Corner	Who explains the mystery to—	Reginald Turnour	Alice Checkfield's guardian.
The Lady Journalist	Who re-tells it to the Royal readers.	Hubert Turnour	His young brother. [man.
Alice Checkfield	Heiress to £80,000.	Count Collini...	An Italian noble-
Mrs. Brackenbury	Her friend.	R. W. Stanford	A solicitor.
		Inspector Macpherson	A detective.

CHAPTER I.

He was very argumentative that morning; whatever I said he invariably contradicted flatly and at once, and we both had finally succeeded in losing our temper.

The man in the corner was riding one of his favourite hobby-horses.

"It is *impossible* for any person to completely disappear in a civilised country," he said emphatically, "provided that person has either friends or enemies of means and substance, who are interested in finding his or her whereabouts."

"Impossible is a sweeping word," I rejoined.

"None too big for the argument," he concluded, as he surveyed with evident pride and pleasure a gigantic and complicated knot, which his bony fingers had just fashioned.

"I think that, nevertheless, you should not use it," I said placidly. "It is not *impossible*, though it may be very difficult to disappear without leaving the slightest clue or trace behind you."

"Prove it," he said, with a snap of his thin lips.

"I can, quite easily."

"Now I know what is going on in your mind," said the uncanny creature, "you are thinking of that case last autumn."

"Well, I was," I admitted. "And you cannot deny that Count Collini has disappeared as effectually as if the sea had swallowed him up . . . many people think it did."

"Many idiots, you mean," he rejoined drily. "Yes, I knew you would quote that case. It certainly was a curious one, all the more so, perhaps, as there was no inquest, no sensational police court proceedings, nothing dramatic in fact, save that strange and wonderful disappearance.

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"I don't know if you call to mind the whole plot of that weird drama. There was Thomas Checkfield, a retired biscuit baker of Reading, who died leaving a comfortable fortune, mostly invested in freehold property, and amounting to about £80,000, to his only child, Alice.

"At the time of her father's death Alice Checkfield was just eighteen, and at school in Switzerland, where she had spent most of her life. Old Checkfield had been a widower ever since the birth of his daughter, and seems to have led a very lonely and eccentric life; leaving the girl at school abroad for years, only going very occasionally to see her, and seemingly having but little affection for her.

"The girl herself had not been home in England since she was eight years old, and even when old Checkfield was dying he would not allow the girl to be apprised of his impending death, and to be brought home to a house of loneliness and mourning.

"'What's the good of upsetting a young girl, not eighteen,' he said to his friend Mr. Turnour, 'by letting her see all the sad paraphernalia of death? She hasn't seen much of her old father anyway, and will soon get over her loss, with young company round her, to help her bear up.'

"But though Thomas Checkfield cared little enough for his daughter, when he died he left his entire fortune to her, amounting altogether to £80,000; and he appointed his friend Reginald Turnour to be her trustee and guardian until her marriage or until she should attain her majority.

"It was generally understood that the words 'until her marriage' were put in because it had all along been arranged that Alice should marry Hubert Turnour, Reginald's younger brother.

"Hubert was old Checkfield's godson, and if the old man had any affection for anybody, it certainly was for Hubert. The latter had been a great deal in his godfather's house, when he and Alice were both small children, and had called each other 'hubby' and 'wifey' in play, when they were still in the nursery. Later on, whenever old Checkfield went abroad to see his daughter, he always took Hubert with him, and a boy and girl flirtation sprang up between the two young people; a flirtation which had old Checkfield's complete approval, and no doubt he looked upon their marriage as a *fait accompli*, merely desiring the elder Mr. Turnour to administer the girl's fortune until then.

"Hubert Turnour, at the time of the subsequent tragedy, was a good-looking young fellow, and by profession, what is vaguely known as a 'commission agent.' He lived in London, where he had an office in a huge block of buildings close to Cannon Street Station.

"There is no doubt that at the time of old Checkfield's death, Alice looked upon herself as the young man's *fiancée*. When the girl reached her nineteenth year, it was at last decided that she should leave school and come to England. The question as to what should be done with her until her majority, or until she married Hubert, was a great puzzle to Mr. Turnour. He was a bachelor, who lived in comfortable furnished rooms in Reading, and he did not at all relish the idea of starting housekeeping for the sake of his young ward, whom he had not seen since she was out of the nursery, and whom he looked upon as an intolerable nuisance.

"Fortunately for him this vexed question was most satisfactorily and unexpectedly settled by Alice herself. She wrote to her guardian, from Geneva, that a Mrs. Brackenbury, the mother of her dearest schoolfellow, had asked her to come and live with them, at any rate for a time, as this would be a more becoming arrangement than that of a young girl sharing a bachelor's establishment.

"Mr. Turnour seems to have hesitated for some time: he was a conscientious sort of man, who took his duties of guardianship very seriously. What ultimately decided him, however, was that his brother Hubert added the weight of his eloquent letters of appeal to those of Alice herself. Hubert naturally was delighted at the idea of having his rich *fiancée* under his eye in London, and after a good deal of correspondence, Mr. Turnour finally gave his consent, and Alice Checkfield duly arrived from Switzerland in order to make a prolonged stay in Mrs. Brackenbury's house."

CHAPTER II.

"All seems to have gone on happily and smoothly for a time in Mrs. Brackenbury's pretty house in Kensington," continued the man in the corner. "Hubert Turnour was a constant visitor there, and the two young people seem to have had all the freedom of an engaged couple.

"Alice Checkfield was in no sense of the word an attractive girl; she was not good-looking and no effort on Mrs. Brackenbury's part could succeed in making her look stylish. Still, Hubert Turnour seemed quite satisfied,

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and the girl herself ready enough at first to continue the boy and girl flirtation as of old.

"Soon, however, as time went on, things began to change. Now that Alice had become mistress of a comfortable fortune, there were plenty of people ready to persuade her that a 'commission agent,' with but vague business prospects, was not half good enough for her, and that her £80,000 entitled her to more ambitious matrimonial hopes. Needless to say that in these counsels Mrs. Brackenbury was very much to the fore.

"She lived in Kensington, and had social ambitions, foremost among which was to see her daughter's bosom friend married to, at least, a baronet, if not a peer.

"A young girl's head is quickly turned. Within six months of her stay in London, Alice was giving Hubert Turnour the cold shoulder, and the young man had soon realised that she was trying to get out of her engagement.

"Alice Checkfield first met Count Collini at one of the brilliant subscription dances given by the Italian colony in London."

"Scarcely had Alice reached her twentieth birthday, than she gave her erstwhile *fiancé* his formal *congé*.

"At first Hubert seems to have taken his discomfiture very much to heart. £80,000 were not likely to come his way again in a hurry. According to Mrs. Brackenbury's servants, there were one or two violent scenes between him and Alice, until finally Mrs. Brackenbury herself was forced to ask the young man to discontinue his visits.

"It was soon after that that Alice Checkfield first met Count Collini at one of the brilliant subscription dances given by the Italian colony in London, the winter before last. Mrs. Brackenbury was charmed with him, Alice Checkfield was enchanted! The Count, having danced with Alice half the evening, was allowed to pay his respects at the house in Kensington.

"He seemed to be extremely well off, for he was staying at the Carlton, and, after one or two calls on Mrs. Brackenbury, he began taking the ladies to theatres and concerts, always presenting them with the choicest and most expensive flowers, and paying them various other equally costly attentions.

Mrs. and Miss Brackenbury welcomed the Count with open arms (figuratively speaking). Alice was shy, but apparently over head and ears in love at first sight.

"At first Mrs. Brackenbury did her best to keep this new acquaintanceship a secret from Hubert Turnour. I suppose that the old matchmaker feared another unpleasant scene. But the inevitable soon happened. Hubert, contrite, perhaps still hopeful, called at the house one day, when the Count was there, and according to the story subsequently told by Miss Brackenbury herself, there was a violent scene between him and Alice. As soon as the fascinating foreigner had gone Hubert reproached his *fiancée* for her fickleness in no measured language, and there was a good deal of evidence to prove that he then and there swore to be even with the man who had supplanted him in her affections. There was

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nothing to do then but for Mrs. Brackenbury to 'burn her boats.' She peremptorily ordered Hubert out of her house, and admitted that Count Collini was a suitor, favoured by herself, for the hand of Alice Checkfield.

"You see, I am bound to give you all these details of the situation," continued the man in the corner, with his bland smile, "so that you may better form a judgment as to the subsequent fate of Count Collini. From the description which Mrs. Brackenbury herself subsequently gave to the police, the Count was then in the prime of life; of a dark olive complexion, dark eyes, extremely black hair and moustache. He had a very slight limp, owing to an accident he had had in early youth, which made his walk and general carriage unusual and distinctly noticeable. His was certainly not a personality that could pass unperceived in a crowd.

"Hubert Turnour, furious and heartsick, wrote letter after letter to his brother, to ask him to interfere on his behalf; this Mr. Turnour did, to the best of his ability, but he had to deal with an ambitious matchmaker and with a girl in love, and it is small wonder that he signally failed. Alice Checkfield by now had become deeply enamoured of her Count, his gallantries flattered her vanity, his title and the accounts he gave of his riches and his estates in Italy fascinated her, and she declared that she would marry him, either with or without her guardian's consent, either at once, or as soon as she had attained her majority, and was mistress of herself and of her fortune.

"Mr. Turnour did all he could to prevent this absurd marriage. Being a sensible, middle-class Britisher, he had no respect for foreign titles and little belief in foreign wealth. He wrote the most urgent letters to Alice warning her against a man whom he firmly believed to be an impostor: finally, he flatly refused to give his consent to the marriage.

"Thus a few months went by. The Count had been away in Italy all through the winter and spring, and returned to London for the season, apparently more enamoured with the Reading biscuit baker's daughter than ever. Alice Checkfield was then within nine months of her twenty-first birthday, and determined to marry the Count. She openly defied her guardian.

"'Nothing,' she wrote to him, 'would ever induce me to marry Hubert.'

"I suppose it was this which finally induced Mr. Turnour to give up all opposition to the marriage. Seeing that his brother's chances were absolutely nil, and that Alice was within nine months of her majority, he no doubt thought all further argument useless, and with great reluctance finally gave his consent.

"The marriage, owing to the difference of religion, was to be performed before a registrar, and was finally fixed to take place on October 22nd, 1903, which was just a week after Alice's twenty-first birthday.

"Of course, the question of Alice's fortune immediately cropped up: she desired her money in cash, as her husband was taking her over to live in Italy, where she desired to make all further investments. She, therefore, asked Mr. Turnour to dispose of her freehold property for her. There again, Mr. Turnour hesitated, and argued, but once he had given his consent to the marriage, all opposition was useless, more especially as Mrs. Brackenbury's solicitors had drawn up a very satisfactory marriage settlement, which the Count himself had suggested, by which Alice was to retain sole use and control of her own private fortune.

"The marriage was then duly performed before a registrar on that 22nd of October, and Alice Checkfield could henceforth style herself Countess Collini. The young couple were to start for Italy almost directly, but meant to spend a day or two at Dover quietly together. There were, however, one or two tiresome legal formalities to go through. Mr. Turnour had, by Alice's desire, handed over the sum of £80,000 in notes to her solicitor, Mr. R. W. Stanford. Mr. Stanford had gone down to Reading two days before the marriage, had received the money from Mr. Turnour, and then called upon the new Countess, and formally handed her over her fortune in Bank of England notes.

"Then it was necessary, in view of immediate and future arrangements, to change the English money into foreign, which the Count and his young wife did themselves that afternoon.

"At five o'clock p.m. they started for Dover, accompanied by Mrs. Brackenbury, who desired to see the last of her young friend, prior to the latter's departure for abroad. The Count had engaged a magnificent suite of rooms at the Lord Warden Hotel, and thither the party proceeded.

"So far, you see," added the man in the corner, "the story is of the utmost simplicity. You might even call it common-place. A foreign count, an ambitious matchmaker, and a credulous girl; these form the ingredients of many a domestic drama, that culminates

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at the police courts. But at this point this particular drama becomes more complicated, and, if you remember, ends in one of the strangest mysteries that has ever baffled the detective forces on both sides of the Channel."

CHAPTER III.

The man in the corner paused in his narrative. I could see that he was coming to the palpitating part of the story, for his fingers fidgeted incessantly with that bit of string.

"Hubert Turnour, as you may imagine," he continued after a while, "did not take his final discomfiture very quietly. He was a very violent tempered young man, and it was certainly enough to make anyone cross. According to Mrs. Brackenbury's servants he used most threatening language in reference to Count Collini; and on one occasion was with difficulty prevented from personally assaulting the Count in the hall of Mrs. Brackenbury's pretty Kensington house.

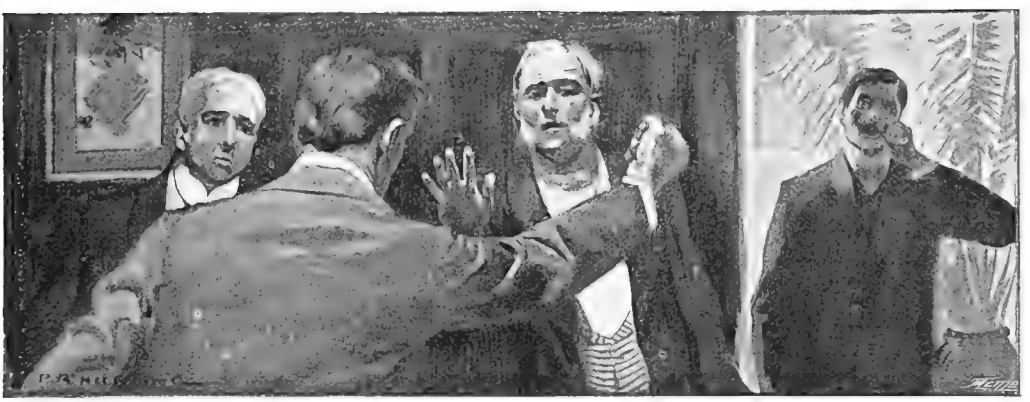
"Count Collini finally had to threaten Hubert Turnour with the police court: this seemed to have calmed the young man's nerves somewhat, for he kept quite quiet after that, ceased to call on Mrs. Brackenbury, and subsequently sent the future countess a wedding present.

"When the Count and Countess Collini, accompanied by Mrs. Brackenbury, arrived at the Lord Warden, Alice found a letter awaiting her there. It was from Hubert Turnour. In it he begged her forgiveness for all the annoyance he had caused her, hoped that she would always look upon him as a friend, and finally expressed a strong desire to see her once more before her departure for abroad, saying that he would be in Dover either this same day or the next, and would give himself the pleasure of calling upon her and her husband.

"Effectively at about eight o'clock, when the wedding party was just sitting down to dinner, Hubert Turnour was announced. Everyone was most cordial to him, agreeing to let bygones be bygones: the Count, especially, was most genial and pleasant towards his former rival, and insisted upon his staying and dining with them.

"Later on in the evening, Hubert Turnour took an affectionate leave of the ladies, Count Collini offering to walk back with him to the Grand Hotel, where he was staying. The two men went out together, and . . . well! you know the rest!—for that was the last the young Countess Collini ever saw of her husband. He disappeared as effectually, as completely, as if the sea had swallowed him up.

"'And so it had,' say the public," continued



"He used most threatening language . . . . and on one occasion was with difficulty restrained from personally assaulting the Count."

the man in the corner after a slight pause, "that delicious, short-sighted, irresponsible public is wondering, to this day, why Hubert Turnour was not hung for the murder of that Count Collini."

"Well! and why wasn't he?" I retorted.

"For the very simple reason," he replied, "that in this country you cannot hang a man for murder unless there is proof positive that a murder has been committed. Now, there was absolutely no proof that the Count was murdered at all. What happened was this: The Countess Collini and Mrs. Brackenbury became anxious as time went on and the Count did not return. One o'clock, then two in the morning, and their anxiety became positive alarm. At last, as Alice was verging on hysterics, Mrs. Brackenbury, in spite of the lateness of the hour, went round to the police station.

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"It was, of course, too late to do anything in the middle of the night; the constable on duty tried to re-assure the unfortunate lady, and promised to send word round to the Lord Warden at the earliest possible opportunity in the morning.

"Mrs. Brackenbury went back with a heavy heart. No doubt Mr. Turnour's sensible letters from Reading recurred to her mind. She had already ascertained from the distracted bride that the Count had taken the strange precaution to keep in his own pocket-book the £80,000, now converted into French and Italian banknotes, and Mrs. Brackenbury feared not so much that he had met with some accident, but that he had absconded with the whole of his girl wife's fortune.

"The next morning brought but scanty news. No one answering to the Count's description had met with an accident during the night, or been conveyed to a hospital, and no one answering his description had crossed over to Calais or Ostend by the night boats. Moreover, Hubert Turnour, who presumably had last been in Count Collini's company, had left Dover for town by the boat train at 1.50 a.m.

"Then the search began in earnest after the missing man, and primarily Hubert Turnour was subjected to the closest and most searching cross-examination, by one of the most able men on our detective staff, Inspector Macpherson.

"Hubert Turnour's story was briefly this: He had strolled about on the parade with Count Collini for awhile. It was a very blustery night, the wind blowing a regular gale, and the sea was rolling gigantic waves, which looked magnificent, as there was brilliant moonlight. 'Soon after ten o'clock,' he continued, 'the Count and I went back to the Grand Hotel, and we had whiskies and sodas up in my room, and a bit of a chat until past eleven o'clock. Then he said good-night and went off.'

"'You saw him down to the hall, of course?' asked the detective.

"'No, I did not,' replied Hubert Turnour, 'I had a few letters to write, and meant to catch the 1.50 a.m. back to town.'

"'How long were you in Dover altogether?' asked Macpherson carelessly.

"'Only a few hours. I came down in the afternoon.'

"'Strange, is it not, that you should have taken a room with a private sitting-room, at an expensive hotel just for those few hours?'

"'Not at all. I originally meant to stay longer. And my expenses are nobody's business, I take it,' replied Hubert Turnour, with some show of temper. 'Anyway,' he added impatiently, after a while, 'if you choose to disbelieve me, you can make inquiries at the hotel, and ascertain if I have told the truth.'

"Undoubtedly he had spoken the truth; at any rate to that extent. Inquiries at the Grand Hotel went to prove that he had arrived there in the early part of the afternoon, had engaged a couple of rooms, and then gone out. Soon after ten o'clock in the evening he came in, accompanied by a gentleman, whose description, as given by three witnesses, *employés* of the hotel, who saw him, corresponded exactly with that of the Count.

"Together the two gentlemen went up to Mr. Hubert Turnour's rooms, and at half-past ten they ordered whisky to be taken up to them. But at this point all trace of Count Collini had completely vanished. The passengers arriving by the 10.49 boat train and who had elected to spend the night in Dover, owing to the gale, had crowded up and filled the hall.

"No one saw Count Collini leave the Grand Hotel. But Mr. Hubert Turnour came down into the hall at about half-past eleven. He said he would be leaving by the 1.50 a.m. boat train for town, but would walk round to the station as he only had a small bag with him. He paid his account, then waited in the coffee-room until it was time to go.

"And there the matter has remained. Mrs. Brackenbury has spent half her own fortune in trying to trace the missing man. She has remained perfectly convinced that he slipped across the Channel, taking Alice Checkfield's money with him. But, as you know, at all ports of call on the South Coast, detectives are perpetually on the watch. The Count was a man of peculiar appearance, and there is no doubt that no one answering to his description crossed over to France or Belgium that night. By the following morning the detectives on both sides of the Channel were on the alert. There is no disguise that would have held good. If the Count had tried to cross over, he would have been spotted either on board or on landing; and we may take it as an absolute and positive certainty that he did not cross the Channel.

"He remained in England, but in that case, where is he? You would be the first to admit that, with the whole of our detective staff at his heels, it seems incredible that a man of the Count's singular appearance could hide himself so completely as to baffle detec-

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tion. Moreover, the question at once arises, that if he did not cross over to France or Belgium, what in the world did he do with the money? What was the use of disappearing and living the life of a hunted beast hiding for his life, with £80,000 worth of foreign money, which was practically useless to him?

"Now, I told you, from the first," concluded the man in the corner, with a dry chuckle, "that this strange episode contained no sensational incident, nor dramatic inquest or criminal procedure. Merely the complete, total disappearance, one may almost call it extinction, of a striking-looking man, in the midst of our vaunted civilisation, and in spite of the untiring energy and constant watch of a whole staff of able men."

[*Here the reader should endeavour to solve the mystery for himself.—Ed.*]

CHAPTER IV.

"Very well, then," I retorted in triumph, "that proves that Hubert Turnour murdered Count Collini out of revenge, not for greed of money, and probably threw the body of his victim, together with the foreign bank-notes, into the sea."

"But where? When? How?" he asked, smiling good-humouredly at me over his great bone-rimmed spectacles.

"Ah! that I don't know."

"No, I thought not," he rejoined placidly. "You had, I think, forgotten one incident, namely, that Hubert Turnour, accompanied by the Count, was in the former's room at the Grand Hotel drinking whisky at half-past ten o'clock. You must admit that, even though the hall of the hotel was very crowded later on, a man would nevertheless find it somewhat difficult to convey the body of his murdered enemy through a whole concourse of people."

"He did not murder the Count in the hotel," I argued. "The two men walked out again, when the hall was crowded, and they passed unnoticed. Hubert Turnour led the Count to a lonely part of the cliffs, then threw him into the sea."

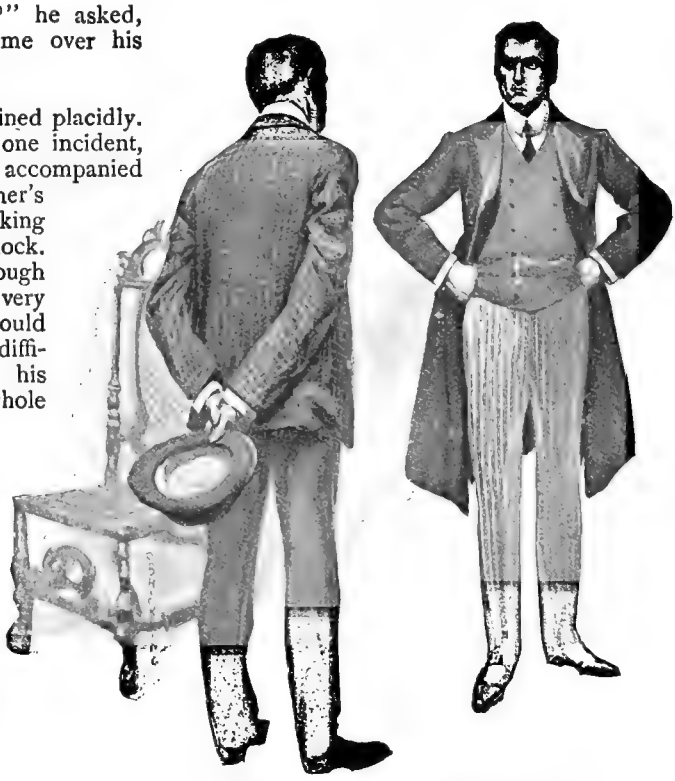
"The nearest point at which the cliffs might be called 'lonely' for purposes of a murder, is at least twenty minutes' walk from the Grand Hotel," he said with a smile, "always supposing that the Count walked quickly and willingly to such a lonely spot at eleven o'clock at night, and with a man who had already, more than once, threatened his life. Mr. Hubert Turnour, remember, was seen in the hall of the hotel at half-past eleven, after which hour he only left the hotel to go to the station after one o'clock a.m.

"The hall was crowded by the passengers from the boat train a little after eleven. There was no time between that and half-past, to lead even a willing enemy to the slaughter, throw him into the sea, and come back again, all in the space of five-and-twenty minutes."

"Then what is your explanation of that extraordinary disappearance?" I retorted, beginning to feel very cross about it all.

"A simple one," he rejoined quietly, as he once more began to fidget with his bit of string. "A very simple one indeed; namely, that Count Collini, at the present moment, is living comfortably in England, calmly awaiting a favourable opportunity of changing his foreign money back into English notes."

"But you say yourself that that is im-



"'My expenses are nobody's business.'"

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possible, as the most able detectives in England are on the watch for him."

"They are on the watch for a certain Count Collini," he said drily, "who might disguise himself perhaps, but whose hidden identity would sooner or later be discovered by one of these intelligent human bloodhounds."

"Yes? Well?" I asked.

"Well, that Count Collini never existed. It was *his* personality that was the disguise. Now it is thrown off. The Count is not dead, he is not hiding, he has merely ceased to exist. There is no fear that he will ever come to life again. Mr. Turnour senior will see to that."

"Mr. Turnour!" I ejaculated.

"Why, yes," he rejoined excitedly, "do you mean to tell me you never saw through it all. The money lying in his hands: his brother about to wed the rich heiress: then Mrs. Brackenbury's matrimonial ambitions, Alice Checkfield's coldness to Hubert Turnour, the golden prize slipping away right out of the family for ever. Then the scheme was evolved by those two scoundrels, who deserve to be called geniuses in their criminal way. It could not be managed, except by collaboration, but as it was, the scheme was perfect in conception, and easy of execution.

"Remember that disguise *previous* to a crime is always fairly safe from detection, for then it has no suspicion to contend against, it merely deceives those who have no cause to be otherwise *but* deceived. Mrs. Brackenbury lived in London, Reginald Turnour in Reading; they did not know each other personally, nor did they know each other's friends of course; whilst Alice Checkfield had not seen her guardian since she was quite a child.

"Then the disguise was so perfect. I went down to Reading, some little time ago, and Reginald Turnour was pointed out to me: he is a Scotchman, with very light, sandy hair. That face clean shaved, made swarthy, the hair, eyebrows, and lashes dyed a jet black, would render him absolutely unrecognisable. Add to this the fact that a foreign accent completely changes the voice, and that the slight limp was a master stroke of genius to hide the general carriage.

"Then the winter came round; it was, perhaps, important that Mr. Turnour should not be absent too long from Reading, for fear of exciting suspicion there; and the scoundrel played his part with marvellous skill. Can't you see him yourself leaving the Carlton Hotel, ostensibly going abroad, driving to Charing Cross, but only booking to Cannon Street.

"Then getting out at that crowded station and slipping round to his brother's office in one of those huge blocks of buildings where there is perpetual coming and going, and where any individual would easily pass unperceived.

"There, with the aid of a little soap and water, Mr. Turnour resumed his Scotch appearance, went on to Reading, and spent winter and spring there, only returning to London to make a formal proposal, as Count Collini, for Alice Checkfield's hand. Hubert Turnour's office was undoubtedly the place where he changed his identity, from that of the British middle-class man, to the interesting personality of the Italian nobleman.

"He had, of course, to repeat the journey to Reading, a day or two before his wedding, in order to hand over his ward's fortune to Mrs. Brackenbury's solicitor. Then there were the supposed rows between Hubert Turnour and his rival; the letters of warning from the guardian, for which Hubert no doubt journeyed down to Reading, in order to post them there: all this was dust thrown into the eyes of two credulous ladies.

"After that came the wedding, the meeting with Hubert Turnour, who, you see, was obliged to take a room in one of the big hotels, wherein, with more soap and water, the Italian Count could finally disappear. When the hall of the hotel was crowded, the sandy-haired Scotchman slipped out of it quite quietly: he was not remarkable, and no one specially noticed him. Since then the hue and cry has been after a dark Italian, who limps, and speaks broken English; and it has never struck any one that such a person never existed.

"Mr. Turnour is fairly safe by now; and we may take it for granted that he will not seek the acquaintanceship of the Brackenburys, whilst Alice Checkfield is no longer his ward. He will wait a year or two longer perhaps, then he and Hubert will begin quietly to re-convert their foreign money into English notes — they will take frequent little trips abroad, and gradually change the money at the various *bureaux de change*, on the Continent.

"Think of it all, it is so simple—not even dramatic, only the work of a genius from first to last, worthy of a better cause, perhaps, but undoubtedly worthy of success."

He was gone, leaving me quite bewildered. Yet the disappearance had always puzzled me, and now I felt that that animated scarecrow had found the true explanation of it after all.

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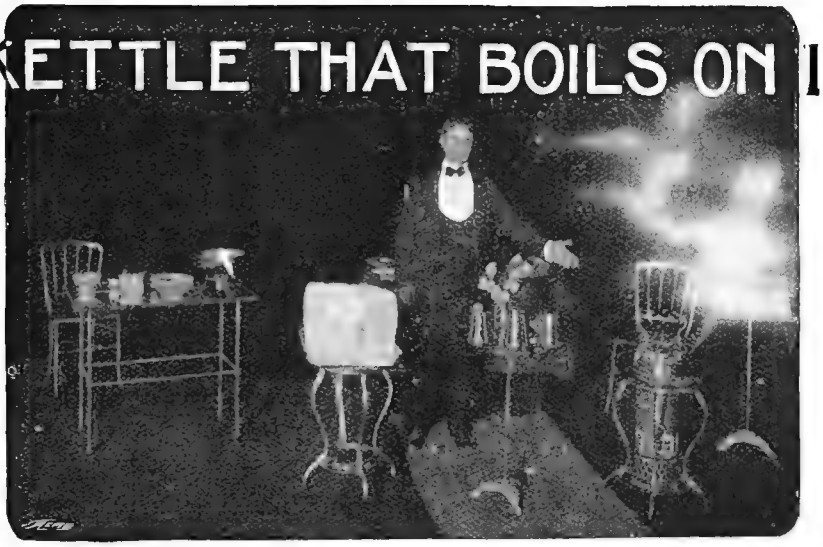
A KETTLE THAT BOILS ON ICE



The Marvellous Feats Performed with Liquid Air—a Liquid 346 degrees Colder than Ice.

By Turner Morton.

Liquid air is a clear fluid, like boiling water in appearance, but water tinged with an ethereal blue, more bright and beautiful than a mountain spring. It is so cold that ice is hot in comparison, and so powerful in effect that a heated bar of steel, when plunged into it, flashes fire, and burns instantly away to nothingness.

It is just the air we breathe, with this difference—from 370 to 400 degrees of heat have been extracted. Its temperature is 312 degrees Fahr. below zero. Air becomes liquid at this temperature, just as steam is liquid at any temperature below 212 degrees Fahr. above zero. If steam had been known to us before water, we should have called water "liquid steam."

Flowers, after being frozen by liquid air, become as brittle, and are as easily broken, as glass.

If liquid air could be ma e cheaply, and could be kept when made, the world, undoubtedly, would spin round a good deal faster. To make liquid air is not difficult, remembering the well-known law that any gases, when compressed, and then allowed to expand rapidly, cool in expansion. To exert enough pressure on breathable air to extract its heat—a pressure of 2400lb. is necessary—costs so much that liquid air is worth one pound a gallon, or two hundred pounds a ton. And ice, the next best thing to liquid air, costs less than a pound a ton.

When air has been forced through the compressing machine that extracts its heat, it trickles through a pipe into a receptacle as a clear fluid. Then arises the problem—

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Cooking an egg on ice is another of the mystifying tricks that can be performed with liquid air: but the egg is really cooked frozen!

how to keep the fluid. For at once it begins to evaporate, owing to the heat of surrounding objects, and to return to its gaseous state. It ferments and boils away, just like water thrown on to a hot stove.

What can be done? If one bottles it, confines it in a steel tube, the heat of its surroundings promptly causes it to expand, so that the strongest steel case would be blown into fragments. So far, the problem of keeping liquid air has only been partially solved.

If one fills a tumbler with the liquid, it is thrown into a boiling ferment at once, as it absorbs the heat. At the end of half an hour it merges into the air from which it came, leaving the tumbler, however, thickly covered with frost. But if the tumbler is surrounded by a vacuum which does not conduct heat, the existence of the precious liquid is considerably prolonged. Hence liquid air is always kept in a glass bulb of special construction, placed within a second larger bulb, with a space between the two from which the air has been exhausted.

At present, because of its cost, liquid air, like radium, is a plaything of the scientists—the most fascinating they know, so many are the beautiful experiments that may be performed, so endless are the possibilities that will be opened up directly liquid air can be cheaply produced.

There is no danger in handling liquid air, so long as it is not closely confined. One may ladle it with a tin cup like so much water; but the cup, if dropped, will smash like thin glass, so brittle does the intense cold make iron or steel substances. One may plunge one's hand into a can full of liquid air

To see a kettle boiling on a block of ice as merrily as on the hob illustrates still further the marvels of liquid air. The explanation is simple: compared with the liquid air in the kettle the ice is hot. Immediately the heat reaches the liquid air the latter begins to vaporise in steam and spray.

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without suffering harm, provided the hand is instantly withdrawn. The heat of the hand forms for a moment a thin cushion of air, which acts like a protective glove; otherwise, the hand would be frost-bitten.

It is a pretty experiment to pour liquid air over fruits, flowers, and other things to see how instantly they become frozen solid. Grapes become as hard as hail-stones; flowers become so brittle that they may be broken with the finger into little bits; beef-steak may be frozen so that it resounds like a bell when struck, and may be pulverised into powder. But the frozen flowers and fruit soon regain their normal temperature, and will be none the worse for their experience.

The magic liquid is the greatest paradox of the day. Though a liquid, it does not wet you if you touch it, for it contains no drop of moisture. Intensely cold, in a sense it is really hot, for it boils amid frozen surroundings. Moreover, the harder it boils, the more intense becomes the cold.

Washing a handkerchief inside a bowler hat by means of liquid air. Strange though it seems, although vast quantities of steam and spray are directed on to the handkerchief, it emerges from the "washing" perfectly dry.

A cigar, that to all intents is out but for a minute spark, immediately burns furiously when it comes in contact with the vaporised liquid air.

With liquid air, one may make a kettle boil on a block of ice! Nothing, indeed, could be simpler. Stand a kettle on ice, fill it with the liquid, and it promptly boils without a fire. The metal of the kettle is hot in comparison to the liquid air, and this causes the air to ferment, to vaporise, to send clouds of spray through the spout. The ice itself, having a temperature of 34 degrees above zero, is hot in comparison to the air—346 degrees hotter. And so it is that if one breaks off a piece of the ice—of the "hot ice"—and throws it into the kettle, the boiling—which may have subsided as the metal cooled—at once redoubles in fury, and the vapour rushes out in clouds. A little

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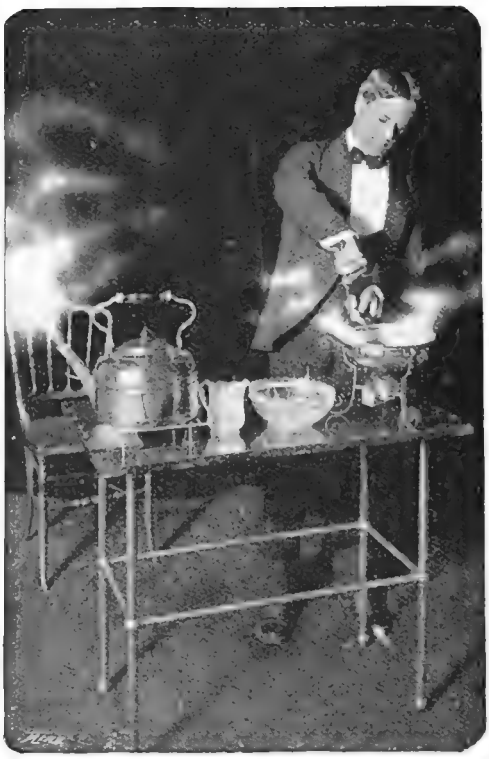
water poured into the kettle makes it fairly boil over in excitement, though the water is instantly frozen as dry as chalk.

To make ice cream in a heated chafing-dish is another little trick that liquid air renders easy. It is merely necessary to pour a little liquid air over the component parts of ice cream—whatever they may be—and in spite of the flame beneath the dish, ice cream appears forthwith. Directly above the flame a sheet of ice gathers at the bottom of the dish.



Ice cream can be made in a chafing-dish heated by a spirit-lamp. All that is necessary is to pour a little of the magic liquid into the cream, when it instantly freezes.

The fact that when liquid air is exposed in an ordinary temperature it rapidly boils away, the nitrogen vaporising first, and leaving for a time a blue liquid which is about 75 per cent. oxygen, allows many pretty experiments. It is also highly important, for it is clear that by making liquid air, pure oxygen, often of such value to doctors, is easily to be obtained.

Many substances that will not take fire readily in ordinary air will burst into flame at the touch of a spark after soaking in oxygen. Thus, a little liquid oxygen will set a cigar ablaze instantly, wool, saturated in liquid oxygen, flashes up like gunpowder when a match is applied, and felt is completely consumed in the same way.

The first great use of the magic stuff will be for refrigeration purposes. As it is, to refrigerate fruit on a long rail journey—say, from California to New York, a distance of 3300 miles—it is necessary to pack each car with from twenty to thirty tons of ice. This is expensive, and valuable space is taken up.

A very small amount of liquid air would do the same work as the ice far more simply. Then, nothing could be better than liquid air for cooling the air we breathe; and in hotels and hospitals a great future awaits it.

The next great application will be for motive and explosive purposes. With liquid air applied to a locomotive, no fire is needed—the heat of the surrounding air is quite sufficient to set the new fuel working the engines. And what fuel could be more abundant than air?

Finally, in medicine, liquid air is destined to play a part for the good of suffering humanity.

Already a Liquid Air Institute has been established in New York, particularly for the treatment of diseases of the skin, and many and wonderful are the cures reported. Applied to the flesh with a spray, liquid air acts at once as a local anæsthetic, and as it prevents blood flowing, it robs the surgeon's knife of all terror.

The only drawback at present to the universal use of liquid air is its costliness.

When the day comes that liquid air can be produced at a cost of a few shillings a ton—how the world will wag then! "It is probable," declares the inventor of liquid air, "that even electricity is not destined to be of greater service to mankind."

A final reflection. At any moment the problem of producing cheap liquid air may be solved, for many clever men are devoting their lives to it. This, I think, is comforting.

The photographs accompanying this article are reproduced by permission of the photographers, Messrs. Campbell-Gray and Edwards-Duncan Ltd., Cheapside, London. The magician in the pictures is the gentleman who, at the time of writing, conducted the clever show at the Palace Theatre, London, known as "The Magic Kettle."

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A CAPTIVE.

At my needlework
I'm sitting
All intent on silken
rose,
While my grey-haired
dragon, knitting,
Glares with spectacles on
nose.
Locked and barred the garden gate,
Safely hid the garden key;
Tranquilly I bear my fate—
Thought is free.

In a trice to-day is banished,
Silken rose and dragon fade,
Prison bars and walls have vanished,
Once again I tread the glade.
Then forgot are space and time,
Fears and tremblings have flown—
For it's understood that I'm
Not alone.

So although they guard securely,
Watch my face with jealous stare;
Though my needle flies demurely
Yet my heart is light as air.
Little need to chafe and fret,
Nearer draws the magic time.
They have locked the gate, and yet—
I can climb.

JESSIE POPE.

JOHN CAMERON

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What Happened to the Girl who had Three Strings to Her Bow.

By May Creagh-Henry.

Vera Norton turned on her pillow with a sigh of drowsy content as the maid placed her morning tea on the table at her bedside. The curtains had been drawn, and a stream of winter sunlight flooded the room. Miss Norton opened one sleepy eye.

"Is it frosty?" she inquired.

"No, miss; it's a beautiful morning. Mr. Alec is up, miss, and asked me to tell you it was a perfect hunting day."

"Thank you, Fletcher."

When the maid left the room Vera opened her blue eyes wide, and smiled. "Alec is up early," she reflected; "is that the result of being in love? It's never had that effect on me!"

She closed her eyes again. "He really is a very attractive person," she meditated. "I'm glad I came to stay with his mamma. It's the only good I got out of that very dull visit to Scotland last month. I wonder why old ladies always like me; they do bore me so horribly! However, one can put up with elderly boredom when it leads to youthful charm, and really Mrs. Manning's son *is* charming. I almost think I'll get up and have a short *tête-à-tête* with him before breakfast."

The blue eyes opened once more, and with a prolonged yawn Miss Norton sat up in bed. She drank her tea and then turned her attention to a small budget of letters on the tray. Two bills she tore up unopened. A forwarded letter which lay beneath them made her charmingly pencilled eyebrows contract in a frown.

"Oh, Jim, of course!" she ejaculated petulantly. "Bother Jim—I wish he hadn't got fifteen thousand a year! If only Alec had it instead! She read the letter through, and at the end she still frowned.

The remainder of her correspondence was dismissed with a cursory glance.

When Vera was ready she hurried downstairs to the hall, where she found Alec Manning—a tall, handsome, young fellow in immaculate pink—standing before the great log fire.

He greeted her cheerily.

"Fletcher gave me your message," she said.

"I'm glad it brought you down so early; yes, we ought to have a grand run to day, with a perfect scent."

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Vera, clapping her hands; "you'll give me a lead, won't you?"

"He'd be a proud man who could do that, Miss Norton. You're a far better rider than most of us. But I've a friend arriving this morning who's the best man I know across country; he has just wired me to meet him at the station at ten, so I shan't have the pleasure of driving you to the meet."

"Then I am sure to be late—I never was

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in time for anything in my life!" Vera laughed and knelt down, extending her hands towards the cheerful blaze.

"No, please don't be late," Alec said, looking down with eyes of deepest admiration at the beautiful girl beside him.

"I wish that fellow hadn't been coming to-day," he continued; "for you are leaving to-morrow, and there is something I wanted to say to you—something very important; your answer matters to me more than anything else in the world."

Miss Norton dropped her eyes and was silent. Alec noticed how dark and thick the lashes lay on her cheek.

He paced up and down the hall for a few minutes, then returned to her side.

"Miss Norton—Vera—I can't wait. I *must* speak now," he said. "I love you, and I want you to marry me!"

The long lashes fluttered on Vera's cheek, whose delicate pink grew deeper as she clasped and unclasped her hands in evident agitation.

"Oh, I'm a fool—I startled you," said Alec in deep contrition. "I spoke too suddenly, but I thought you must have guessed."

Vera raised her lovely eyes to his, but as she opened her lips to speak, the portly and imposing family butler appeared to inform them that breakfast was served, and, crossing the hall with stately steps, he threw open the dining-room door and waited for Vera and Alec to enter.

"I hear mother coming downstairs." Alec whispered hurriedly, "Give me your answer now—only one word, Vera!"

"I can't—I can't," she answered, rising.

"Then send me a line by Mayne—he will be bringing the horses to meet us, and I can't wait till to-night to know my fate."

"Very well," Vera answered hesitatingly.

Together they turned to greet Mrs. Manning, and entered the dining-room.

An hour later Vera stood before her mirror in a well cut riding habit, but she seemed to have lost all interest in the charming appearance she presented, for she gazed vaguely at her reflection, and her thoughts were far away.

Presently she sat down at the writing-table, and, opening her blotter, took up a pen to write, but all she wrote was her own initial on the blotting-paper in various sizes so that it looked like a flight of birds.

"Oh, why on earth did I ever meet Alec?" she muttered. "It's landed me in a horrible muddle. What's the use of finding one's ideal man if it's only to upset one's carefully laid plans! There's no doubt Alec is quite

Vera laughed and knelt down, extending her hands towards the cheerful blaze.

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ideal—really a darling, and Jim certainly is a gilded pill—poor old Jim!"

Vera took the letter she had received that morning and read it through again.

At the sound of horses' hoofs on the gravel, she started up and ran to the window.

A groom stood at the door with her hunter, and Mayne was there too.

She sat down at the writing-table once more, and, taking up a pen, hurriedly scribbled a note, then she tore the letter signed "Jim" into small pieces.

At this juncture a maid presented herself at the door.

"If you please, miss, your horse is waiting, and Mayne has orders to take a note."

"Here it is." Vera handed a note addressed to Alec Manning.

"I'll be down directly," she said.

When the door closed behind the maid, Vera sank into a chair with a sigh.

"How I wish I could have been off with Jim first!" she murmured; "it's the only time I've ever allowed my heart to over-rule my reason. Well—I'll write to-night, and, after all, what does it matter? Really at times, it's rather a bore to be so attractive—still I meant to make Alec care, and I've succeeded—that comes of being clever as well, for when I arrived on the scene I know he had a decided penchant for one of the dowdy vicarage girls."

Vera rose with a triumphant little laugh, and, crossing to the looking-glass, surveyed herself critically and smiled approval.

When Vera trotted out of the drive gates and turned into the high road, the groom, riding behind, watched her with respectful admiration. They reached the place appointed for the meet in good time, and Miss Norton's appearance on the scene caused quite a stir. Those who knew her jostled each other for a greeting; the remainder of the field looking on in envious admiration, inquired who the new beauty was.

Presently an elderly woman, with piercing black eyes and an aquiline nose, rode up to Vera's side.

"Morning, Miss Norton," she said in a hard voice; "what are you doing in these parts?"

"I'm staying with the Mannings."

"Ah, I didn't know. Gus would have been over to see you, I expect."

"Where is he?" Vera asked somewhat anxiously.

"Up at the hall at this moment, refreshing the inner man."

"Is he staying with you?"

"Yes, he came down for a few days hunting—to get over the shock, you know." Lady Dashover gave a short laugh.

"What shock?" enquired Vera, wishing Lady Dashover and her nephew Gus at Jericho.

"Why, Lord Scarsdale's death, of course."

"Lord Scarsdale's death!" echoed Vera.

"Yes, didn't you know? He died abroad three days ago. It's only in the paper to-day; perhaps you didn't see one this morning?"

"No," replied Vera feebly.

"The old man snuffed out most unexpectedly, so Gus comes into the property and title."

"Oh—yes—of course."

Everything seemed to be swimming round, and, as Vera spoke, she swayed in her saddle.

"What's the matter? You look awfully queer."

"I think it's—the heat," she stammered, moving away.

Lady Dashover rubbed her aristocratic nose—red with cold at the extremity—and pondered deeply as she watched Vera's retreating form, conjecturing as to the cause of the girl's strange agitation. Miss Norton murmured excuses to someone, and turned her horse's head homewards.

On reaching the house, she fled up to her room and locked the door, then throwing aside her hat and gloves, sank into a chair.

"Oh, what a fool I've been!" she muttered through her clenched teeth. Fool!—Fool!—Fool! And this morning I thought I was clever! But who could guess?—Lord Scarsdale! Oh, what a fearful mess I've made of it! I must get away before Gus finds out I'm here—now—to-day—this very afternoon. What excuse can I make? I must lie hard, anyhow, and once safely out of it, I can write my explanations."

Having arrived at this conclusion, Vera went downstairs to find Mrs. Manning, and drawing on her imagination, described in detail how she had stopped at the post-office to send an express letter, and found a telegram, recalling her at once.

Mrs. Manning trusted the news was not serious, greatly regretted the sudden termination of Vera's visit, and finally persuaded her not to leave till an afternoon train.

The four o'clock express, Vera calculated, would avoid the contingency of any awkward encounters.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Alec Manning's expectations

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of a perfect hunting day were fully justified, for a few minutes after he and his friend had arrived at the meet, hounds found, and with a "tally-ho"—"gone forward!" were away in full cry, leaving the roadsters and all but the pick of the field far behind.

Alec was a straight rider, and keen as the best, but this morning the magnificent forty minutes' run had lost its charm for him, owing to the fact that nowhere had he been able to descry a trim little figure in a dark grey riding habit—the girl round whom, it seemed to him at the moment, the whole universe centred.

She should have been in the "first flight," but not even when hounds killed in the open, after a glorious run, was there any sign of her among the remainder of the field.

Alec's heart would have been heavy but for the thought of a hastily-scribbled note in his breast pocket, which told him how that same girl loved him, and might one day become his wife.

He happened to find himself near Lady Dashover, who at once informed him of Vera's sudden indisposition and departure from the meet. Alec had no fancy to listen to Lady Dashover's chatter and conjectures, so, politely cutting her short, trotted across the field to join his friend—an extremely plain man, but with something attractive in his ugliness.

"What's up, old man?" he questioned. "You look down on your luck."

"I'm not," Alec answered, "I'm the luckiest dog alive, Burne, only I had hoped to see someone who isn't here—tell you about it later."

"Right," answered his friend. "Of course it's a girl—the eternal feminine! I've a secret of my own; but, as it's a secret, I can't divulge it at present."

"No!" exclaimed Alec incredulously, "*you*, too? Well, I'm blessed!"

"So am I," laughed Captain Burne, as they trotted off after hounds to draw another cover.

Towards four o'clock Alec and Burne found themselves outside a village inn displaying the sign of the Three Fiddles; and, feeling thirsty after another long run, they dismounted and called for drinks. As they entered the bar-parlour, a voice greeted them in a peculiar drawl, and they turned to find Lady Dashover's nephew, Augustus Branson—known to his friends as "Gusta"—already in possession.

"Aw—by Jove," he said, "good old Burne! Fancy meeting you!"

"Hullo, Gusta! I didn't see you this morning. What are you doing here?"

"No—aw—I got left—somehow; awful rotten mount auntie gave me—gone in the wind, don't yer know."

"Manning—this is 'Gusta,' of 'Ours'; you've met before," said Captain Burne.

Alec nodded, as the owner of the drawl fixed an eyeglass in his eye and beamed mildly.

At this moment the landlord brought the drinks.

"Gentlemen," Gusta said solemnly—"will you wish me luck? Uncle has gone to another world and left me all he had in this."

"No, by Jingo! Has he really?" exclaimed Captain Burne.

"Ya—a—s; it's the first bit of luck that ever came my way."

"I drink to you, my boy." Burne raised his glass: "Gusta—Lord Scarsdale!" he cried.

"Here's to you, my lord!" laughed Alec.

"Aw—thanks awfully. Now, I'll give you a toast, by Jove!"

"Go on," they chorused.

Gusta raised his glass high:

"The lady I—am—engaged—to," he said slowly.

"You engaged! Gusta?" exclaimed Captain Burne.

"Aw—ya—as."

"What's her name, old man?"

"Yes, let's have the lady's name," echoed Alec.

"Her name? Aw—Vera."

Alec started.

"By Jove! I'll drink your toast," said Captain Burne, "and give you another to that name."

"I, too," said Alec, raising his glass. "Three Veras! what a strange coincidence!"

"Her surname, Gusta?"

Gusta smiled with unction.

"Here's to my *fiancée* — Miss Vera Norton!" he said blandly.

"Vera Norton!" exclaimed Alec Manning.

"Vera Norton!" echoed Captain Burne.

The three men stood facing one another, glass in hand.

"Aw—what's up—why don't you drink?" inquired Gusta.

"Did I understand you to say you were engaged to Miss Vera Norton?" inquired Alec, pale to the lips.

"Aw—ya—as; that's what I said," murmured Gusta.

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"Aw—pray don't—this letter will save you the trouble."

"Then sir, it's a lie! *I* am engaged to Miss Norton!"

"*You!*" thundered Captain Burne, while Gusta looked blankly from one to the other. "Let me tell you, gentlemen, that Miss Norton promised a month ago to become *my* wife!"

"Aw—now, what the blazes does this mean?" said Gusta, dropping his eyeglass in agitation.

"It means, gentlemen, that I prove my claim by this."

Alec drew from his breast pocket the note Vera had written that morning.

"And I—by this."

Captain Burne produced a letter in Vera's handwriting, which began, "My dear Jim."

"And I—by this," said Gusta, opening and reading aloud a somewhat timeworn epistle which ran thus:

MY DEAR GUS,—You're quite nice, and I'm really rather fond of you, but I wasn't cut out for love in a cottage! I can't say "yes" now, but if you ever become Lord Scarsdale, I might. One wants some sort of inducement to give up one's freedom, you know. Provided I've not found a greater one by that time, you may claim me if I am still

VERA NORTON.

There was silence in the room while one might count twenty.

"It seems to me," said Jim Burne at last; "it seems to me that we've been had."

"Then Miss Norton must have deliberately promised to marry me, knowing she was pledged to *you!*" Alec exclaimed.

"Aw—I don't think she can have known of uncle's death. The newspaper chaps only had it last night."

"That makes it less horrible."

"But what price *me?*" chimed in Jim Burne. "We've been engaged on the Q. T. for a month!"

"Great Heaven! Have women no honour?" Alec said bitterly.

"Aw—we men have the monopoly of that."

"Women's supply ceased with the demand, I take it," said Jim savagely.

"Well, what are we to do now?" asked Alec.

"Revenge ourselves!"

"Ya—as, by Jove! Revenge ourselves!"

"It's clear," Alec continued, "that she would have married you for your money, Burne; and you, Branston—I mean Scarsdale—for your title; but what the devil did she engage herself to *me* for?"

"For your attractive self, my dear chap—aw—you score."

"Score!—to have loved a mercenary, ambitious, heartless flirt. Score! to be made a fool of like this! What did she intend to do with us all, I should like to know."

"Bless you, she was clever enough to hook us. She would have been quite equal to chucking us back into the matrimonial pond, but it's unpleasant to be foul-hooked."

"Well, the question is, what's to be done?"

"Aw—let's go and call on the lady."

"'Pon my word, Gusta, we will."

"But she's my guest," said Alec.

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"Cheer up, old man, she might have been your wife," replied Gusta.

Alec bit his lip and turned on his heel.

"Aw—I say—let's have our drinks."

The three men raised their glasses to their lips in silence, and Alec, having emptied his, threw the tumbler on the ground with a crash. The others followed his example.

As they rode away, the landlord exclaimed to his wife: "The gentry have strange ways when thirsty, Maria!"

On the road discussion ran high as to what should be said or done, and no entirely satisfactory conclusion had been arrived at when a dog-cart came in sight. As it drew nearer, Alec recognised his own coachman, and pulled up.

"Where have you been, Saunders?" he inquired.

"To the station, sir, with Miss Norton."

"To the station?"

"Yes, sir. The lady was to catch the four o'clock train, sir, but we was too early, by far, and the mare all of a lather, sir, the pace Miss Norton would 'ave me go."

"Is Miss Norton at the station then, Saunders?"

"Yes, sir; it wants still fifteen minutes to four."

Five minutes later the three men dismounted hot and breathless at the sleepy little country station.

Vera had been sitting deep in meditation, congratulating herself on having eluded Gus, and avoided any awkward interview, when suddenly she looked up to see three figures standing in the doorway.

She recognised Alec, and rose with a guilty start.

Then as she realised the identity of the other two men, she turned ghastly pale, and sank down in speechless horror.

To a casual observer the situation might have appeared farcical.

Jim Burne stepped forward and glanced at his watch.

"We do not wish to make you miss your train, or to interfere in any way with your extremely abrupt departure."

"And we regret," interrupted Gus, "that a delicate and private matter should be discussed in the unromantic surroundings of a station waiting-room."

"But"—continued Captain Burne—"we think there has been some little mistake, and we wish to avoid further misunderstanding."

Vera looked hopelessly from one to the other. She who could lately have turned any one of them round her little finger, now realised all her power was gone, since they had discovered the true—or rather—the untrue woman!

"If you have nothing to say, Miss Norton, we will leave you," Alec remarked coldly, "but we have each a letter to return. You are perhaps, a collector."

"I—I think I can explain," Vera stammered, determined to brazen it out.

"Aw—pray don't—this letter will save you the trouble."

"And this!"

"And this!"

The three men simultaneously placed the letters on the table.

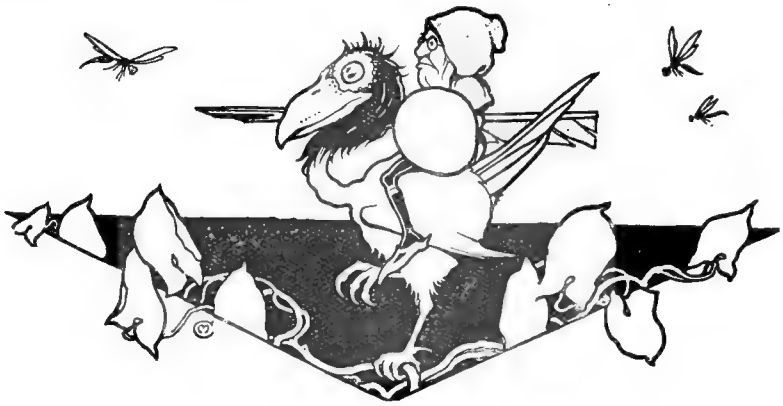
"But I—" began Vera, covered with confusion.

"Excuse me, Miss Norton, we must regretfully forego your explanation, for your train is signalled," said Captain Burne.

They raised their hats and left her.

Vera Norton felt extremely small.

All her deep-laid schemes had failed. After all, she caught neither fortune, title, nor husband—nothing, indeed, but the fast train back to town.



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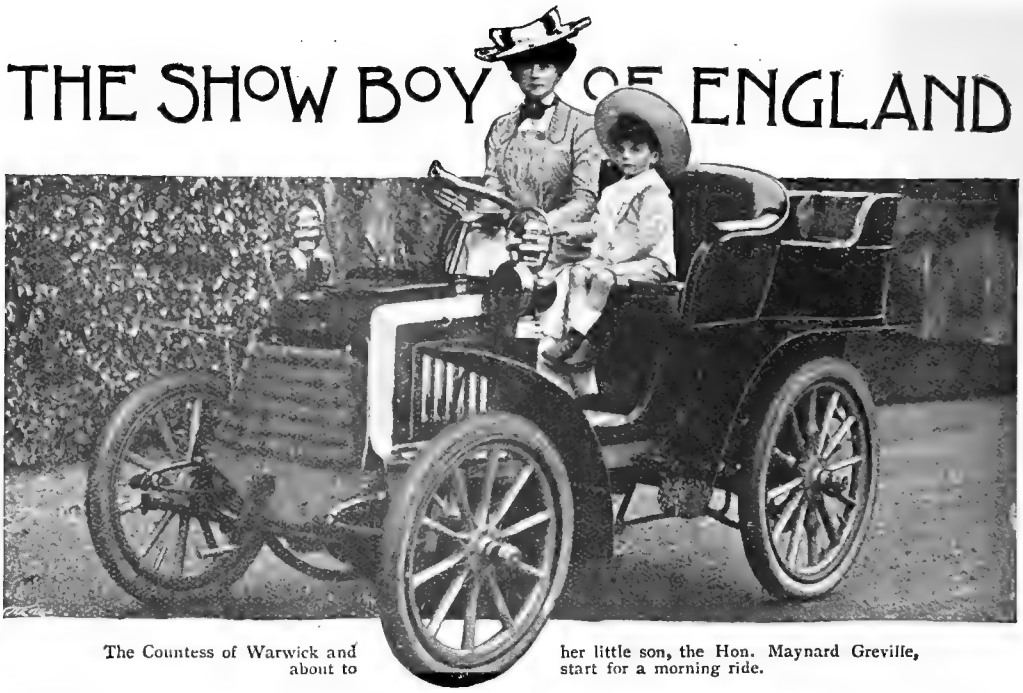
THE SHOW BOY OF ENGLAND



The Countess of Warwick and her little son, the Hon. Maynard Greville, about to start for a morning ride.

Telling About the Hon. Maynard Greville, who is Six Years Old, and who has Already Acted as Page at Twenty Weddings.

By S. Bertram.

It does not often happen that the life of a little boy is written when he is six years old. But then this is an exceptional little boy, and the son of an exceptionally pretty and clever peeress, which, of course, makes all the difference in the world.

The mother of this little boy is the Countess of Warwick, who, everyone knows, is one of the most beautiful women in England.

As might be supposed, the Hon. Maynard Greville, for such is the name of this young aristocrat, inherits a very large share of his looks from his mother. He is, in fact, herself in miniature, and Lady Warwick is not the slightest bit jealous. Of the many beautiful things that surround this noble lady's life, her little boy surpasses all. Far from being jealous of the admiration his appearance invariably provokes, the Countess is delighted and proud to think that her child should have so good a claim to number himself among the "handsome Warwicks."

Photo by *Lafayette.*

The latest portrait of the Hon. Maynard Greville, who is the most accomplished little wedding-page in England.

From the day that the Hon. Maynard Greville first made his appearance in public—it was at his christening, and when he was three months old — he has had endless admiration showered upon him, from the King and Queen down to the humblest dependent at Warwick Castle.

Although but six years old, he has attended more weddings than many people ten times his age. And in each of these he has taken a very active part, namely that of page of honour to the bride —really a most important post when it is remembered that on him depends the pace with which the bride trips to the altar rails.

In all the world there is not a more experienced little

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"wedding-page," or one that knows better how to conduct himself more correctly.

As may be supposed, this much experienced little personage is more often than not the junior in years to his brother train bearers. But this does not for a moment deter him from putting them through their paces, and showing them just precisely what they ought to do. In fact, the Hon. Maynard Greville has so far shown his superiority in this direction, that to-day no fashionable wedding is considered complete without his smart little presence as page of honour to the bride.

Photo by *Charles Reid.*

The Show Boy of England is a fearless little horseman.

A pretty anecdote is told of Maynard's first wedding. Of course, he was dressed, as he always is, in the smartest and quaintest costume imaginable, and for several days before he had been carefully drilled in all the little etceteras of etiquette and deportment at a wedding.

Well, at last the day arrived, and, as might be expected, his serious little face and angelic demeanour provoked quite an outburst of admiration. "Handsome as a painting!" "Just as lovely as his

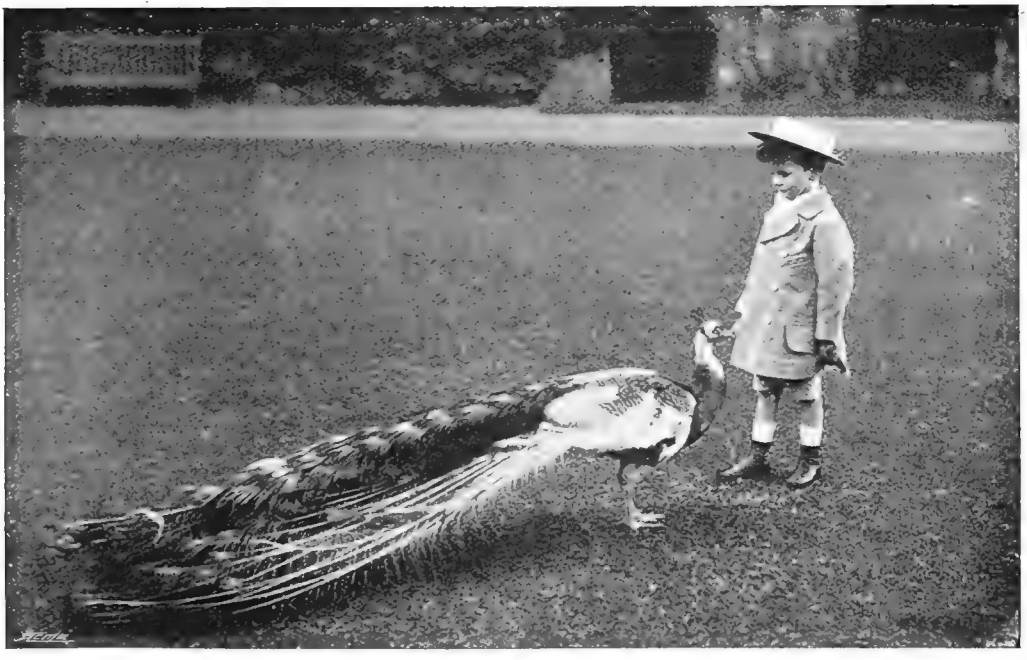

Photo by *Charles Reid.*

Every morning Maynard pays a visit to all his pets. Even the stately peacock deigns to notice his little master.

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Photo by Charles Reid.

"In the days of my youth." An "early" picture of the Show Boy and his Japanese deer. Since this photograph was taken, Maynard has been promoted to knickers.

mother!" "Perfect as an angel!" These were only a few of the whispers that floated through the church, as down the aisle the young bride walked, with her little cousin Maynard following in her train, bearing the cushion on which she was to kneel and make her bridal vow.

So far, Maynard had lived up to the remarks of his admirers; but mischief was brewing in that four feet nothing of curly locks and velvet breeches. Religiously following his previous instructions, the little page carefully laid the cushion in position, and patted it into an oval shape for the bride to kneel upon.

Then the mischievous sprite broke loose. No one could say precisely how it broke loose or when; for, looking as solemn as any judge, he stepped back in his place beside the other little pages.

Everything was now ready for the bride to step forward. This she did, or, at least, tried to do. Then a sudden bursting of stitches proclaimed that something had gone amiss, and Master Maynard gave a hop, skip, and jump, and with a giggle let loose her long train upon which he had been standing all the while. With the exception of this occasion he has always behaved himself with astonishing solemnity.

Now it must not be imagined that, while at six years of age the Hon. Maynard is a little courtier and a little gentleman of the world, he is nothing else. The Countess of Warwick is far too practical a woman to devote her care to training up her small son to be nothing more or less than a mere "show child." As a matter of fact, he is what some people call a prodigy—bright and sharp as any boy twice his years.

In the lovely grounds of the Castle Lady Warwick delights to roam with her little son. Together they wander about the terraces and gardens, looking after the flowers, or down lower, where their numerous pets are waiting

Photo by Charles Reid.

Some of his feathered pets.

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to greet them. Like Lady Warwick, the Hon. Maynard loves animals. He fears nothing, from the geese that swim in the clear waters of the Avon to the baby elephant in the stable.

All his pets, both animals and birds, have come quite to know their little master. The Japanese deer knows quite well that he will receive nothing but hugs and kisses, and —perhaps he likes the last best—dainty morsels of bun and biscuit from Maynard's hands.

One of the most interesting pets is the baby elephant. Directly he spies his little master, whose curly head just reaches up to the top of Jumbo's back, he clumsily ambles up to him, and stretches out his trunk for a bun. Of course he gets it, and a parting kiss on the trunk as the little boy dashes off to pay his next morning's call.

Then there is the Japanese deer, to most people quite a terrifying little animal with its short, stumpy horns. But young Maynard loves the deer, and it quite returns his good feeling to judge by the way the little animal allows itself to be fondled, or nibbles tender bunches of grass from the little boy's hands.

The grounds of Warwick Castle are a miniature Zoo in themselves. Miniature is just the word to use, for the baby elephant is a miniature, and the Japanese deer, and the pretty Shetland pony upon whose back his small master, at present quite a miniature, tears fearlessly over the grass.

Then there are the Chinese geese—by no means miniatures. Many a Master Six-years-old has been put to flight by these doughty birds. But not Master Six-years-old Warwick. He does not mind a bit how much they hiss or crane their necks. What he wants them to do, whether to waddle amongst the grass, or to flop with a splash into the river, the geese must do it, or they will feel the hazel twig that he carries for their especial guidance.

Warwick Castle stands on the banks of the Avon. Fringing the river are many stately oaks, whose spreading boughs and thick trunks are only surpassed by the grey towers and ivy-clad walls of the ancient castle.

But we must not pause to admire the historic set of the Warwicks. It is not of ancient Warwick that I am writing, but of a vastly modern Warwick.

See! the castle gates are flung open to their widest. A whirring noise is heard, and forthwith comes a motor car. In it is seated a lady.

Who she is cannot for a moment be doubted, as she gazes fondly at the little boy seated beside her, whose white-socked legs dangle a full twelve inches from the floor of the car.

A whirr! a toot-toot! and the Show Boy of England and his mother rush past on their way towards the green, Warwick lanes.

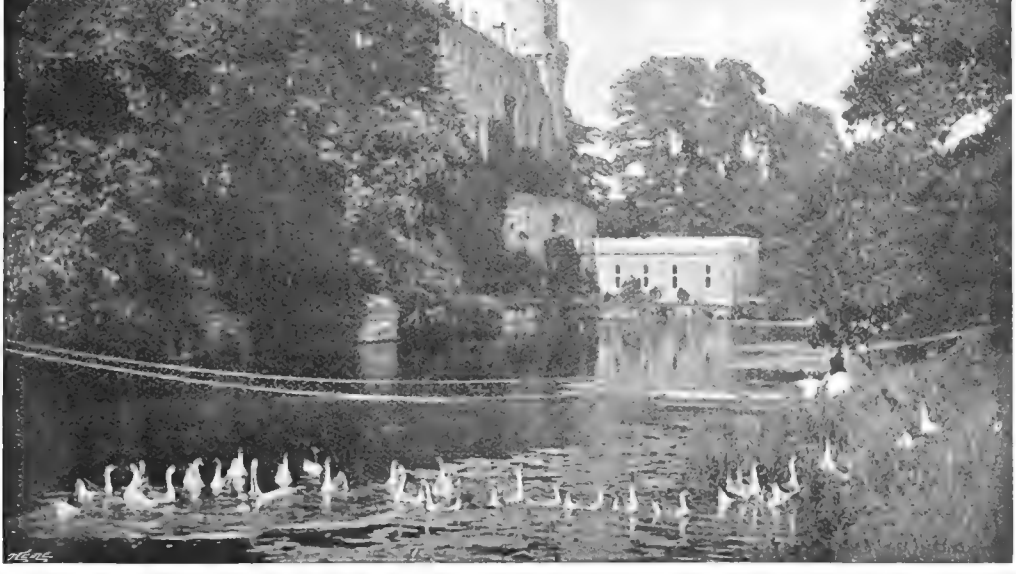

Photo by Warwick Castle, the stately home of the Show Boy of England. *Charles Reid.*

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A Tale of Love, in which Two Punctures and a Tramp are Concerned.

By Gwendolen Bright.

It all began with that puncture! Now, I maintain that a puncture is a misfortune that may befall the highest grade bicycle as easily as a second-hand American, and reflects no sort of discredit upon the injured wheel.

I was very young at the time, and, naturally, well cared for. Every day, Kitty used to put on a big blue pinafore and a pair of her father's old gloves, and set to work herself to polish my silver-plated handlebars and rims, sometimes, in the excess of her devotion, even brushing my tyres, and trying to dust the under side of the mudguards.

I should have been much more comfortable if she had bestowed a little attention upon my hubs, and cranks, the nuts, and so on, and if she had poured the oil into the right places. I must say she was most liberal with the oil—when she remembered.

It is true that sometimes my thirst drew a loud groan from me, and Kitty, in a fit of self-reproach, would seize the oil-tin and empty it into every discoverable hole, until I was almost choked with the stuff, and wept oily tears all down my tyres.

But about this puncture. We were nearly eight miles from home when we discovered the damage—on a lonely country road, with not even a cottage in sight. But there! everyone knows the kind of place in which one always gets a puncture!

For some miles I had been feeling rather depressed in my back tyre. A sharp, pricking pain took my breath away, and every stick and stone on the road seemed to go right through me. At last, with a gasp, I subsided altogether, and there we were, stranded!

Kitty dismounted and looked sorrowfully at me, shaking her head as though I had grievously disappointed her. Now, I maintain—— But let me get on with my story! It really only begins at this point, when I saw a passing acquaintance of mine coming towards us.

He was rather a shabby machine, and, to tell the truth, I felt very uneasy when his master dismounted and laid him on the grass beside me. His quiet manner, however, soon set me at ease, and while his owner, a strapping young fellow in tweeds, attended to my wounds, we two became quite chatty. My new friend, it appeared, had often noticed me, and had long sought to make my acquaintance.

"Rather a dull business, riding alone, don't you think?" he said. "Besides, is it quite safe for a young and charming bicycle like you to be alone on these country roads?"

"What is there to be afraid of?" I asked.

"Well, tramps, for instance—bicycle thieves—highwaymen!"

"Highwaymen!" I repeated, with a little shriek; "I thought they were extinct!"

"Oh, not at all, I assure you. But, there! I am making you tremble. Only promise you won't go so far alone again."

I promised.

After that evening, it was surprising how often we used to meet—by chance, of course—at first.

What a summer that was! What merry spins we had together, flying side by side between tall hedgerows, skimming across the downs with the wind behind us, crawling leisurely up the hills, and rolling merrily down the other side! Then in some narrow,

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pretty lane we would rest, standing close together, with handle-bars entwined.

"Look at those two!" said the man in tweeds, one evening, as we stood thus lovingly together. Kitty looked at us, then at him, and they both laughed and blushed.

"Look at those two," whispered my companion to me a moment later, winking his lamp-bracket wickedly in their direction.

They were also standing with handle-bars entwined.

There came a time when my bicycle-friend spent an hour or two in the evenings with me in my little house in the back garden, while his owner, I suppose, was having supper with Kitty's family.

Then, towards the end of the summer, came a gap in our intercourse—long, dreary weeks, when we only saw each other in the distance—a time when life seemed hardly worth living, and cycling became a miserable bore! Just because *they* had quarrelled—those others! That's the worst of human beings—they consider only their own whims!

Once, after a month of this terrible separation, I spied my friend dawdling slowly along, a few yards before me. He had seen me, and was giving me an opportunity of overtaking him. My front wheel wobbled with excitement. But, alas! Straight past him I was whisked, turning neither to the right nor the left.

Kitty's head was inches higher than usual as we flashed past. Girls are queer creatures! It is beyond a mere bicycle to understand their ways.

When I was once more in my shed, leaning dejectedly against the wall, all at once Kitty put her arms on the handle-bars, and, resting her head on them, sobbed aloud!

"Cruel, horrid thing!" she sobbed. "And it was all my fault, I know! But he ought not to have said—said—what was it he said? Something about—well, never mind; he ought not to have said it, whatever it was! No gentleman would have said such a thing—and Jack was always so gentlemanly! I shall never speak to him again—never—never! But oh, Jack! How I miss you?"

Presently she dried her eyes.

"How miserable he looks, poor boy!" she murmured. "He'll be anxious, too, about my riding alone! Serves him right! I *will* ride alone, just to vex him—horrid thing!"

So she used to ride past his window every evening, holding her head a trifle higher each time. I believe she could see him from beneath those long eyelashes of hers, as he lurked behind the curtains, watching her go by.

One evening we had a narrow escape—nearly met him! We had called at Orchard House to order some apples, and as we came down the path, a voice on the road outside called out:

"Hello! Jack! riding alone, nowadays? How's that, old man?"

"Hello, Frank! that you?"

Kitty's hand was on the latch of the gate, but she drew back close to the high wall, when she heard Jack's voice replying. We heard the two men dismounting, and for quite twenty minutes we were imprisoned in that shadowy orchard, waiting for the end of their chat.

At last they bade each other "good-night" and parted, with a laugh over some joke.

A few minutes later Kitty cautiously opened the gate, glanced hurriedly up and down the road, and then mounted.

She seemed in good spirits, too, and

"Look at those two!" said the man in tweeds, one evening, as we stood thus lovingly together.

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He had seen me, and was giving me an opportunity of overtaking him

laughed as she murmured, "Poor old boy! He does want to kiss and be kind!"

One evening she passed Jack's window as usual, with her head held higher than ever. She *must* have seen that cloud of tobacco smoke in the window! We had a lovely spin, in the quiet autumn sunset, and Kitty sang aloud as we scudded along before the breeze.

It was dusk when we turned into the narrow, high-hedged lane that led homeward. Just then a horrid bramble ran into my front foot—tyre, you call it. My little mistress was too absorbed in her own thoughts to notice it, or perhaps it was too dark for her to see. It hurt terribly. Every few yards I ran, the thorny piece of bramble sank deeper into my flesh. At last I could bear it no longer, and shrieking loudly, subsided, flat and helpless.

Kitty dismounted in great consternation. At the same moment a tramp sprang from the hedge and laid hold of my handle-bars. He was a terrifying object, with tattered old clothes, and hair sticking out through the holes in his hat. Kitty screamed, but clung tightly to me.

"Leggo that bike!' growled the ruffian, "and shut yer bloomin' row, else——"

He seized Kitty's wrist, and twisted his ugly face into the most dreadful contortions. Poor little Kitty screamed again, and struggled to free herself.

"Now I'll trouble yer for yer rings, young lady. 'Tain't safe for ladies to be riding abaht the country with so much joolry! An' yer can 'and out yer purse, too, while yer abaht it! Oh, yer won't—won't yer? Now look 'ere!" he drew a pistol from his ragged coat, and held it to her head.

"Mind it doesn't go off!" screamed Kitty, trying to snatch it.

"That's a good 'un, too, s'elp me bob!" shouted the tramp delightedly. "Mind it doesn't go horff, she says—as if it wasn't mide to go horff!"

"Oh, *please* take care!" wailed Kitty, now thoroughly frightened. "*Please* don't let it go off!"

"Now, look 'ere, Miss," said the dirty rascal, with a persuasive grin, "I don't want to 'urt yer—not me! Bless yer, I knows a purty gal w'en I sees one, as well as anybody else! And let me tell you, the purty gals ain't shy o' likin' me, neither! Now, let's talk the matter over friendly, and see if we cannot come to terms. S'pose we let the joolry stay, an' you 'and over the brass, an' this yere bike, an'——what! y'are goin' to show fight, are yer? Struggle, would yer? Box my ears, eh? Ho, ho! I'll soon——".

"Hello! you dirty, cowardly scoundrel! Clear out of that, quick! You wretched old scarecrow! How dare you?"

"Oh, Jack—Jack, save me! He's got a pistol, and he's going to kill me!"

Jack threw his bicycle into the hedge and made a dash for the tramp. The man turned on him with a snarl, and pointed his pistol.

Jack seized it, and the next moment the two men were rolling together on the dusty road, while Kitty promptly subsided on the grass and fainted.

The two men scrambled to their feet. Jack unfastened the neckband of Kitty's blouse. The tramp stood still and rubbed his head ruefully.

"Run and fetch some water—quick!"

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said Jack curtly, "and then make yourself scarce!"

"Poor little bird!" he murmured, rubbing her hands gently. "He's scared you out of your wits!"

He bathed her forehead with the water which the tramp brought, and then signed to him to clear off.

When he had gone, Kitty sighed, opened her eyes, and went off into hysterics, laughing and crying at the same time, as women always do when they have had a shock.

Of course, Jack comforted her and petted her, and, as soon as she got control of herself, they walked homewards, with his arm around her—to support her, you know!

So you see, once more a puncture proved a blessing in disguise to these two lovers—to say nothing of their bicycles—and now they were even happier and more devoted than ever.

Kitty was loud in her praises of Jack's courage, in tackling and overcoming such a dreadful ruffian, and she was never tired of relating the adventure until he, being a modest man, became quite uncomfortable.

"I wish you wouldn't talk so much about it, Kitty," he would say. "It was nothing, really! Any fellow would have done the same!"

"But you must allow me to be proud of you, Jack dear! It was so brave of you to fight him, especially as he had a pistol——"

"Which probably wasn't loaded," laughed Jack.

They were resting on the stone parapet of a favourite bridge. The moonlight danced on Kitty's new ring.

"Kit," began Jack after a pause, "I want to tell you something."

"A secret?" cried Kitty. "Oh, I love hearing secrets, but mind, I cannot undertake to keep one!"

"No—a confession."

"A confession? Oh, that's better still! What is there in your dark, dark past, sir, that remains unrevealed?"

"I am half afraid to tell you."

"Oh—this *is* interesting! It must be something dreadful!"

"Look here, Kit—don't jest—I'm serious! I—I've played it awfully low down on you! It was very mean of me to pose all this time as a champion of the weak, and all that sort of thing——"

"But, Jack—that savage tramp——"

"Was a chum of mine—Frank Russell! You don't know him. I met him out riding one evening, and—he saw how cut up I was about—losing you. We laid our heads together and arranged the whole scene. I was to come up just at the critical moment, and—do you understand, Kitty? What do you think of me now? Kitty—turn your face this way—dear! Don't cry—for goodness sake don't cry! Take your hands from your face! Look up—do look up! Say you forgive me! Think how desperate I was!"

There was a pause. Kitty was struggling with her feelings.

Presently a low voice said, "I forgive you—on one condition!"

"Well?"

"That you will also forgive me."

"Forgive you? Rather! But what is *your* crime?"

"Bend down and I'll whisper—lower still!" She put her hands round his neck, as schoolgirls do when they tell secrets, and whispered —"*I knew!*"

"Oh, Jack—Jack, save me! He's got a pistol, and he's going to kill me!"

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS.

This method of wearing the hair was affected by the Society lady of Paris during the reign of Marie Antoinette. It then became fashionable amongst the *grandes dames* of the English Court.

The Editor will be Pleased to Consider any Quaint Photographs Sent in.

ELABORATE HAIRDRESSING.

THE sight of this fair maiden with her somewhat lofty method of wearing the hair might well turn the hearts of theatre-goers to stone.

Still once—after all, not so very, very long ago—no Society lady would have dreamed of driving out, or going anywhere, unless her hair were thus arranged and adorned.

The fashion originated in France during the reign of Marie Antoinette, and for a time held sway amongst the Court ladies of England.

As may be supposed, it was only by the addition of much false hair that the hairdresser succeeded in arranging the tower-like structure above the head of his fair client.

Rich silks and magnificent white ostrich feathers crowned this gorgeous arrangement of the hair, a perfect garden of flowers climbed luxuriously up the sides, whilst the whole was adorned with jewellery, diamond brooches, and long chains of pearls.

FISH THAT HAMPER WARSHIPS.

LOOKING at this picture one might pardonably suppose that it is of the keel of a disused warship considerably overgrown with ivy.

But it is nothing more or less than the bottom of a modern war vessel, recently returned from abroad. The dark masses that cluster over almost every part are barnacles. So quickly and in such numbers do these small shell-fish attach themselves to the hull of a boat that they considerably impede her speed.

Directly a warship returns from a long commission, especially if it be in the Pacific, she is docked, and the work of clearing the bottom of barnacles begins.

The keel, propeller, and rudder of the German warship "Frederick the Great," showing the hundreds of tons of barnacles that have made their home thereon.

A comparison with the two sailors standing near the propeller enables one to realise what a colossal undertaking this is, especially when it is known that the work is done entirely by hammer and chisel.

The task is long and tedious, and forms a considerable item in the upkeep of the World's Navies.

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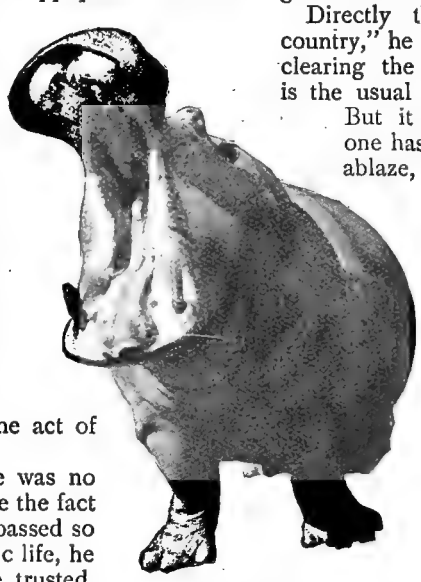
A RECORD GAPE.

Of all queer creatures that are, this certainly looks the queerest. One might easily suppose that here was some prehistoric monster, instead of a sleepy old hippopotamus named "Guy Fawkes."

Guy Fawkes' address is the "Zoo," London, and he has lived in the cage where he was born more than thirty-two years.

The photograph is unique, for, although many pictures have been taken of hippopotami with their mouths open, nobody has, hitherto, succeeded in securing a snapshot of one in the act of yawning.



A unique snapshot of a hippopotamus indulging in a gigantic yawn.

To take the picture was no easy matter, for, despite the fact that Guy Fawkes has passed so many years of domestic life, he is by no means to be trusted. Escorted by the keeper, the photographer entered the yard in which the huge brute's swimming tank is built. At his master's command the hippopotamus opened its mouth, revealing an enormous tongue and blunt teeth. A hurried snapshot was then taken. But an instant later, the keeper suddenly called to the photographer to take another picture. This was done, and Guy Fawkes was "snapped" in the midst of indulging in a gigantic yawn. The result is shown in the curious picture at the top of this page.

CLEARING THE BUSH.

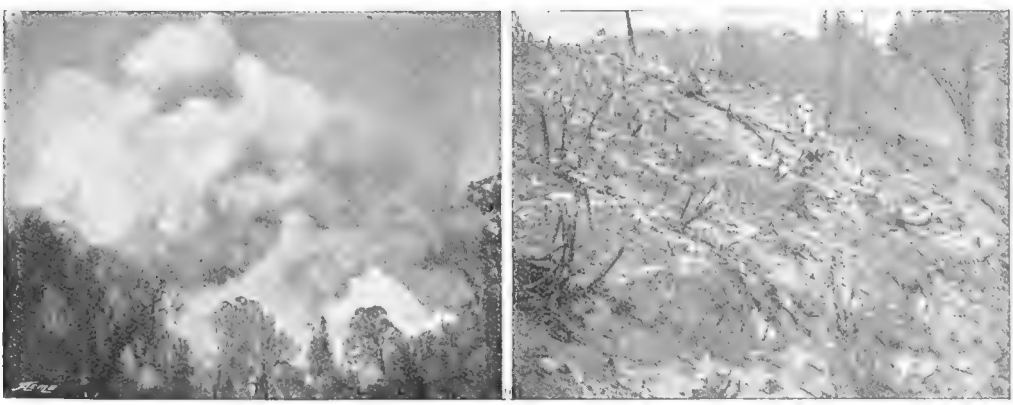
Many colonists, settling in New Zealand, take up land in the "back country." Here the soil, although immensely rich, is overgrown with bush.

Directly the settler arrives up "back country," he begins making arrangements for clearing the trees and undergrowth. Fire is the usual means adopted for this object.

But it must not be supposed that all one has to do is to set the undergrowth ablaze, and then sit down until the fire subsides. Such a method would be useless.

During the winter the settler occupies himself in felling trees and cutting down the undergrowth. By midsummer the fallen bush has become as dry as tinder. Then, with the greatest care, to insure a successful "burn," the settler sets it ablaze in many places. In a few minutes the bush has become a roaring furnace, that eats up tree and undergrowth, leaving the ground clear and ready for cultivation.

Burning the bush is not altogether devoid of danger. Care has to be taken not to venture inside to set the bush ablaze. Settlers who have ignored this caution have frequently never returned. At the best of times it is difficult to penetrate into the tangled mass of felled trees and undergrowth. But with the whole enveloped in a blinding cloud of suffocating smoke it is well nigh an impossible task to scramble out in time to avoid the flames. In this way many a settler has perished on the land he hoped to sow on the following year.



Dense volumes of smoke arising from the burning bush. On the right is shown all that remains of the once almost impenetrable bush after the settler has set it on fire.

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My Nephew "Max".

By Fox Russell.

Being a Further Extract from a Married Uncle's Diary.

Have been feeling terribly worried ever since dear Mollie insisted upon our giving fancy dress dance

"Why fancy dress? So unnecessary. If one *must* have such idiotic functions as dances, why not dress as ordinary civilised human beings?"—Suggested this to dear Mollie.

"Oh no—fancy dress much better fun!" she says.

Sigh and resign myself to my fate.

Dear Mollie thinks I should make a good King Charles—object strongly, and ask why I should impersonate small spaniel?

"Not a King Charles spaniel, you silly old thing! I mean the martyred king himself," she says.

Object to martyred king—don't think his conduct was at all correct. Explain this.

Dear Mollie says:

"Then be a Black Brunswicker?"

Wonder how I should look as Brunswick Blacker?—Black Brunswicker, I mean?

"We *must* ask Max and Tommy, you know, Charlie." Remonstrate with dear Mollie. Say I don't think boys should go to dances without a *chaperon*—I mean keeper. Must be very bad for them to sit up so late—bad for their digestion, too.

Dear Mollie laughs.

"Why I don't believe school-boys possess such a thing!"

Protest feebly for some time longer, but dear Mollie pats my cheek, calls me "dear old thing," and—succeeds, as usual, in having her own way.

Write invitation to boys to come on Tuesday and stay over dance—Wednesday night. Mildly hint in my letter I shall expect them to behave extremely quietly, and to wear strictly unobtrusive fancy dresses.

Max writes back as follows:—

"School (blow it!).

"Dear Uncle Charlie,

"I should think we *would* like to come to your Fansy Dress Kick-up! *Rather!* And I should have liked to bring poor old Boots—you remember him? Spotty-faced chap, orl over pimpils, but means well—only the sily young ass has just gone and caught scarlid fever or meesils or sumthing like that, just as the holidays are coming on too; why diddent he wait till they were over and then catch them?

"You say weer to wear unobstrusive dresses. What do you think of me as Oliver Cromwell or Lord Kitchener? I want sum dress where I can wear (or is it 'wear I can where?') a sword and a merstarch.

"I told young Stinker he oughter go as a Griller from the Zoo, becos he wouldent want any disguys. He got so enoide.

"Shall I ask Fatty Summers to come? He's orfly short, and round as a barril. I told him he oughter tie a piece of string to his leg and go as the Captive Baloon, and he got shirty and sed 'Why don't *you* go as a gentleman? No one would know you.' He thinks this is sarksum and reppartea.

"Another feller here, Stoddart major, suggested that I should put a paper frill round

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my neck and go as a ham. That's just becos I've got a rosy face—he's pasty himself. And I sed he was a fool; and he sed 'You shut up,' and I sed 'I shan't shut up for you, anyhow.' And he sed 'I'll jolly well lick you arfter school;' and I sed 'All right, young cocksure!'

"After 'absence' was called over we went and had it out in the playing-field. We had seven rounds, and I sucked a lemon until I got an orfle pain in the stum—chest. But I gave him an orfle licking, and then we shook hands.

"The guvnor ses we may go and choose our costewms as we pass through town on our way home for the holidays. I *can't* make up my mind how to go. Shouldn't I look fine as a Knight in Armer? Then I could wear a sword and a merstarch, only the merstarch would be hidden by my vizzer.

"There's a new boy come this term. He ses he's bin a pirate on the Spanish Mane, but when young Cheeky Walton arsked him where the Spanish Mane was, he had to own up he diddent egsackly know. This creates distrussed. But he swore he knew orl about pirates becos he'd bin aprentised to the business since he was nine—he's fifteen now—but had to retire from the profeshun when his galleon was captured.

"I've since heard that he's lived orl his life in Surbiton, and never seen the sea egsept when his mater takes him to Brighton. He *is* a liar!

"We'll arive *shay voue*—you see I haven't forgotten my French—on Tuesday. If you like to tellygram us we could come sooner.

"Love to Aunt Mollie.

"I say, if you wear to die enny time—of coarse, I don't mean now, egsackly, but your getting rarther old, ain't you—do you think Aunt Mollie would like to marry me? Becos orlthough there's a predgejugice agenst widders, *I'me* not predgejugiced a bit. You mite tell her this sometime—prettend to let it out by axcident, you know.

"I hope my saying this won't hurt your feelings, but, on the conntry, you may be glad to know that Aunt Mollie will have the best of husbinds wen you have to kick, and you carnt live for ever, can you?

"Your affecte. nephew,

"MAX.

"P.S.—S'pose I was to come to the Dance ass the German Emprer? I told Stinker that if I did he'd have to be the Crown Prince—though he only looks big enough to be half-crown Prince. Should you like me to be Richard 3? or Coor de Liong? or R. Hood and his merry men?"

We saw, running towards us, the figure of Tommy with the yard-**dog's teeth firmly fixed in the slack of his trousers.**

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Gave letter to dear Mollie. Dear Mollie positively ill from excessive laughter for rest of day.

Preparations for dance so wearing. My own sanctum invaded for reception of hats and coats.

So trying. Remonstrate—no use. Dear Mollie manages everything, including me. So worrying, too, considering what dress to wear.

Interview costume person, who comes from town on purpose. Costume person very annoying young man—makes perfect stream of idiotic suggestions. So distressing!

"Now, sir, you'd look very well as Bluff King 'Al. Could make you up a treat."

Decline to be made up "a treat," whatever that may be. Dear Mollie also negatives suggestion decisively.

"No, Charlie, the character might put bad thoughts into your head!"

Hasten to assure her no need for alarm, when I see she is laughing at me. Dislike being laughed at. Explain this. Sigh, and again consult costume person.

After much discussion, finally settle on Brunswick Black — Black Brunswicker, I mean—the dress originally suggested by dear Mollie. Feel, thus far in advance, that I shall look a monumental ass in it.

Within an hour of costume person's departure, change my mind and decide to appear as "Courtier of the time of Charles II." Wire costume person to that effect. Think black leather costume of Brunswicker too suggestive of modern motor-man.

TUESDAY.—Boys just arrived. Inform me they intend to keep secret their characters—trust they are not bad ones. Butler informs me, an hour later, that "the young gentlemen is goin' on outrageous in the servants' 'all, and jest broke a winder." Go out and speak severely to boys, telling them to keep out of servants' hall in future.

Twenty minutes afterwards, cook rushes in to dear Mollie to give notice—"the young gents are in her kitchen," and she "can't be 'put about' in that fashion when company's comin', 'not if it was ever so!'"

Mollie pacifies cook, whilst I order boys to remain in sitting-room, and not go to the servants' regions at all.

"Well, what *is* a feller to do then?" asks Max half-sorrowful, half-indignant.

Suggest cards.

"Rot!" they both cry together.

Brilliant idea—would they like to amuse themselves at stables? They run off, whooping with delight. So thankful.

Go up to my room surreptitiously to try on costume. Don't tell dear Mollie, or she might think me conceited. Wig of long love locks rather trying—blue velvet trou—knickerb—trunks—what *are* they called? Very tight round—oh, everywhere. Struggle till purple in face to get them to meet.

Hah! at last—fearfully tight, though. Now for the jacket; this fits fairly well.

Blood suddenly freezes, as sound of horse galloping over croquet lawn, coupled with diabolical shriek, smote on my ears. Rush to window and see Max has got on one of my hunters, which has bolted with him, jumped rails out of park, and is careering round garden. Max, both hands clasped round horse's neck, shouting for help.

Rush downstairs and out into garden. Just then, stud-groom and two or three of the stablemen arrive. Horse can't get away, and we gradually corner him.

Directly he is caught Max recovers all his natural "cheek," and, looking at me, bursts into a fit of laughter. So rude.

"There's nothing to laugh at, Max!" I say indignantly; "how came you to get on this horse without my permission?"

"Well, Uncle Charlie, *that's* a good 'un! Why, you said yourself we could go and amuse ourselves in the stable. Well, we couldn't be amused without getting on the horses, could we? At least, I couldn't—but I don't know what's happened to Stin——" But at that moment a demoniac yelling arrested our attention, and we saw, running towards us, the figure of Tommy with the yard-dog's teeth firmly fixed in the slack of his trousers. A stable lad quickly rescued him, brought him before me, and stood him beside his brother.

Assumed magisterial air, and began with dignity:

"Boys, the behaviour you have been guilty of—the—the——" And then I noticed that not only my nephews, but all assembled were broadly grinning.

Felt very annoyed and puzzled at this—so disrespectful. Began again:

"I would have you know that when——" But a fresh burst of laughter from Max, together with smothered giggles from servants, interrupted me again.

"Well, Uncle Charlie, you *do* look a sketch! And I'm blowed if those things'll keep up much longer by the look of 'em."

I turned and fled precipitately. I had forgotten my "Courtier of the time of Charles II." dress. I had not even had time to button the braces to the—thingamys—

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before rushing out to Max's rescue. And here was the ungrateful little bea—boy laughing at me! Then, just as ill-luck would have it, in hurriedly entering the house, I ran full into the arms of Lady Fitzfoodle, who had just called to see dear Mollie! So embarrassing. Had to stop and shake hands. Wish Lady F. wouldn't put up that confounded *lorgnette* of hers to look at my costume—or want of it.

Thomas, too, my butler, evidently suffering severely from suppressed laughter. Should sack Thomas tomorrow, but know I could not replace him.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT.—Nine-thirty, and no musicians arrived yet. Anxiety horrible. Cannot have dance without music. Would not be ball, but orgie—and such a mild one!

First few guests already arriving.

Still no band!

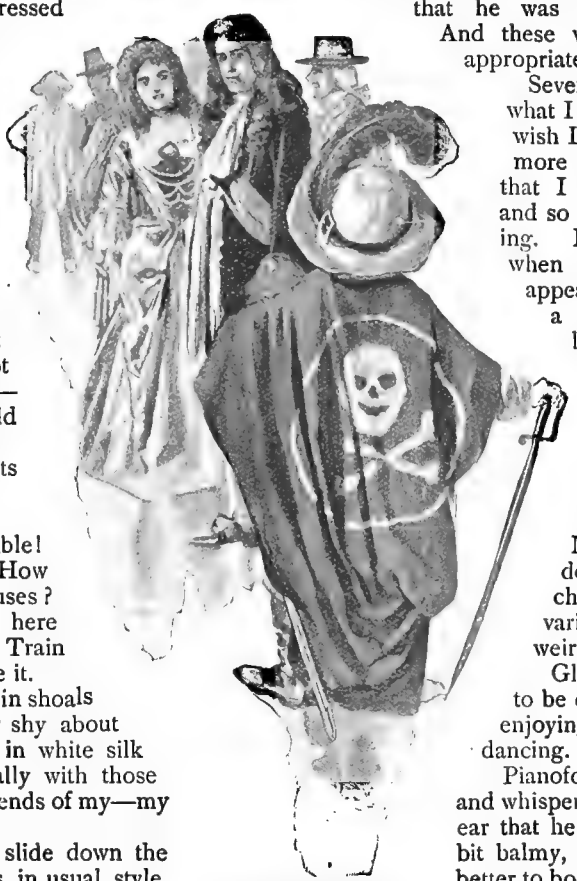
This is too horrible! What can I say? How shall I make excuses? Thank goodness, here they are at last! Train late—don't believe it.

Guests arriving in shoals now. Feel rather shy about showing my legs in white silk stockings, especially with those little frills on the ends of my—my—thingamys.

Boys suddenly slide down the staircase banisters, in usual style. Max attired in weird costume of buff leather jerkin and high boots, broad buckled belt, with a lantern and a perfect armoury of knives, pistols, and daggers stuck in it; "a sword and merstarch" are also in evidence, the latter being simulated with burnt cork. Brown stockinette tights, trunks of green, slashed with white satin, and a long cloak, complete his bodily attire.

His head is covered—not to say smothered—by a soft felt sombrero, two sizes too large for him, with long plume in it. I wonder if he is a "Briggind Chief," as he called it in his letter, or Guy Fawkes?

Turned to Tommy, and found that his small form was enveloped in a scarlet robe, very much too long for him, and over which he continually tripped. His head was adorned by a skull cap, and his feet were in red shoes so large that all his skill was needed in keeping them from falling off. A burnt cork moustache seemed strangely out of place with the priestly robes, until he informed me that he was Cardinal Richelieu. And these were their ideas of appropriate dresses!



"You *do* look an ass, Uncle Charlie!"

Several people asked me what I was? So annoying; wish I had worn something more distinctive, or else that I could label myself, and so save trouble of replying. Matters not mended when Max, to whom my appearance was evidently a shock, blurts out in loud, earnest tones: "You *do* look an ass, Uncle Charlie!" Forswear fancy dress for the future.

Dear Mollie simply fascinating as Marie Stuart. Why do women always look charming, and men invariably fools, in these weird costumes?

Glad other people seem to be enjoying dance. Not enjoying it myself—hate dancing. So heating.

Pianoforte approaches me and whispers confidentially in my ear that he thinks "Cornet is a bit balmy, and would it not be better to boot him out at once?"

So disturbing to nerve centres. Consult Thomas who undertakes "booting business" immediately. So relieved.

During earlier portion of evening Max and Tommy very much *en evidence*, Max amusing himself by, amongst other things, pouncing out at parlourmaid on dark staircase.

Having previously masked himself, effect sufficiently terrifying to cause faintings and hysterics. Rush off to pacify parlourmaid, and then to try and find that imp of juvenile depravity, Max. But he is too clever for me,

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and makes himself scarce. Lady Fitzfoodle, in passing dark place on staircase where I stand, frantically endeavouring to reassure parlourmaid, sniffs audibly, and, turning to Miss Scandleford, says, in stage whisper:

"Really, I think our host might have shown better taste than this. I think, too, that his wife ought to be informed."

So maddening. Should like to scalp Lady F., but know how impossible it would be to do this, as she wears a wig.

Towards supper time, prolonged absence of my nephews begins to excite in me uneasy feelings.

Hunt for them in unostentatious way, but it really looks as if—displaying common sense I should never have given them credit for—they must have retired to bed. So thankful.

We go into supper. Supper rather a success. Only enjoyable part of entertainment. Separate tables for two, or four. Very cosy arrangement. Had been rather annoyed all evening at a certain Captain Steyning's evident attention to dear Mollie, though quite sure dear Mollie herself never really flirts.

However, determined to play the part of the "bold, bad man" in revenge, so took in to supper, prettiest girl amongst the guests, though not to be compared to my own Mollie, as a matter of fact.

Had great fun at our *table á deux*, although sitting in slight draught. So treacherous! Then, without a moment's warning, the gas all went out!

Sat in black darkness for minute or two, wondering—then supposed I ought to "do something," so determined to grope my way out of room and make inquiries. First put my fair companion's cloak around her shoulders to keep off draught.

By bad luck struck my nose violently against her head, in darkness. Most painful. Eyes watered with force of blow, and just at that exact moment in rushed Thomas with lamp. May have been my heated imagination, but it really seemed that everyone in room happened to be looking at us at that precise juncture. So embarrassing.

All noise hushed, and most awkward silence ensued. Never passed such an anguishing two minutes in my life before.

Finally bolted out of room, and went down to cellar to see if anything had happened to meter. On arriving saw that gas had evidently been turned off there! Most mysterious.

After sending servants to attend to burners in various rooms, turned on meter-handle again; and, determined to have no repetition of *contretemps*, locked cellar door after me and pocketed key.

Dance proceeded rapidly to its close; and just as carriages began to arrive for the guests, gas suddenly went out again! At almost same moment our ears are saluted by sound of explosion in cellar.

Followed by Thomas and half-a-dozen guests, I rush down to basement to see what has happened, unlock cellar door, and, snatching lamp from butler, strive to pierce dense smoke with my eyes.

Dismal voice I at once recognize as Max's.

"Oh, Uncle Charlie, get us out of this! I believe Stinker's killed, and I know I'm dying. We've been blown up!"

Dragged both boys out of villainous smelling smoke. Max's eyebrows and hair singed, and face blackened with gunpowder. Tommy not singed, but begrimed with coal dust.

Fortunately our doctor present amongst guests. Makes thorough examination, and declares neither boy injured, except superficially. So thankful. Most agitated, however, and glad to see nephews to bed, and then retire myself.

Slept late next day. So exhausted. Dear Mollie also late. Also cross; said nasty things to me at breakfast about girl I took in to supper, and threatens to discharge that parlourmaid. So unjust. Explained. Dear Mollie refused to listen. Despaired of making her understand.

Nephews left by early train, perfectly sound and well. Dear Mollie wouldn't speak to me all day. Most unhappy.

Next morning, following letter from Max:—

"Dear Uncle Charlie,

"Youle be glad to hear we got home all rite. I say I *was* in a funk, in that beasely coal-seller larst nite! I'll tell you all about it.

"We got rarther sick of the Fansy dress dance—none of the pretty girls seemed to want to dance with us—I allways thought gurls liked dancing with anybody whose a Bacheler as we are. But they seamd to preffer even old marrid men, like you.

"So I sed to Stinker, 'Let's go and find the coal-seller, and let on to be Catesby and Guy Fox in the sellers of the House of Commens—wee'll take those Pharoahs Serpints—it's a parlor firework they sell, for letting off indoors—and wee'll have a ripping lark.'

"So he tucked up his Cardinal Richlew robe, and we manidged to dodge the servants and got down to the seller. Wee'd taken the

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2 candils out of our bedroom, and a box of matches, and then we went and eggsplawed under the coals, and I stuck my swored inter the ground and—— You know Shakepeare? At all evence, I s'pose you've herd of him? Well, I stamped my foot, and sed to Stinker—of coarse, it was a squotation that I had cribbed, you know:

"'Good Catesby, go, effect this beastly business soundly!'.

"And young Stinker sed:

"'Go and do it yourself!'

"I sed, 'You young ass, that's Shakepeare,' and he sed, 'I don't care a blow; if you want to dig a hole in the coals for the Pharoah's serpints do it with your swored.'

"So I did. And now I come to think of it, those were'nt the egsact words of Shakepeare. So I spose they're partly me and partly Shake's—'Max, Shakepeare & Co.' Eh? *I* think Shakepeare's rather clever, don't you?

"Wen Ide worked a hole in the coal (now, that ryme's mine, aint it?), I shuv'd the serpint in, and all was prepared for blowing up the House of Parlimint.

"Well, jest then I happened to see the gas meater, and so I sed:

"'Here's larks! We'll turn out the gas over the hole house.'

"And Stinker shouted 'Hooray!' so loud, I smaked his hed and told him if he did it again the conspiritters would be discoverd.

"I turned the gas orf at the meater, and soon as I herd footprints coming down stares, put out our lite and hid round the corner of the wall. Then you came, Uncle Charlie, and turned it on again; and then, blowd if you diddent axcerdently *lock us in!*

"We diddent know what to do. We lit our candel and roomynated—we diddent want you to find out it was us in the seller, yet we diddent want to be locked up all nite.

"So arfter more roomynashon we agreed wee'd turn out the gas again, and wen you came down and opened the door wee'd try to bolt.

"We got all reddy, and then I turned the handel of the meater, and put out the gas again, but in stepping back I triped over my swored and knocked the candil flying.

"I suppose it set fire to the hole lot of the serpints—we only meant them to go off one at a time, of course—and, by gum, they all blew up and sent us flying!

"And you know the rest.

"Give our love to Aunt Mollie, and hoping to stay with you again soon,

"Your affecshunate nephew,

"MAX.

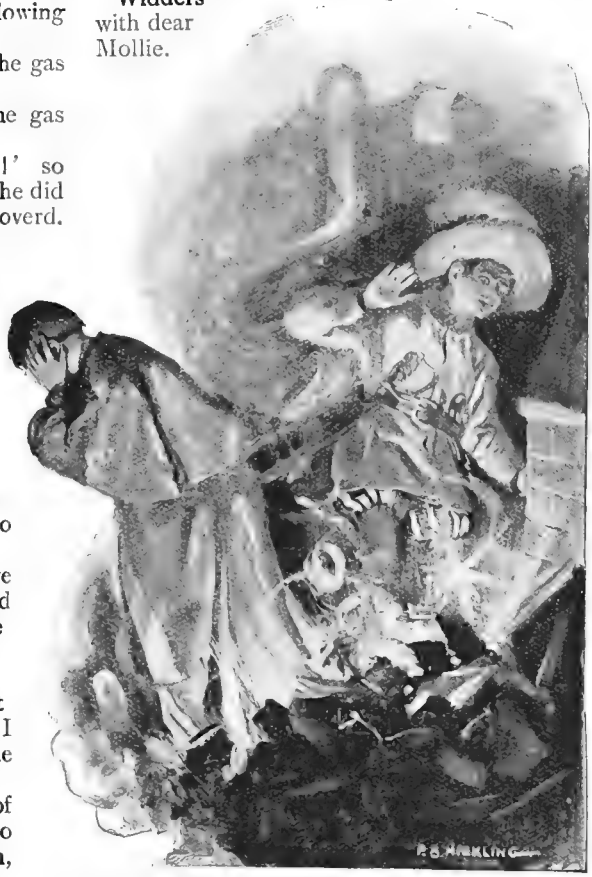
"P.S.—I say, you *did* look an orfle ass in your Fansy Dress, diddn't you?

"P.S.S.—I wonder if you've eggsplained that little thing I wrote of—you know: about widders—to Aunt Mollie yet? If you haven't, doant foreget to."

So ends this precious incident.

How it was that we escaped being blown up, I really cannot tell. Will take care that my graceless nephews do *not* escape "blowing up" next time I run across them. Might well have been annihilated by their confounded carelessness.

Think Max possibly right in his suggestion that I looked an "orfle ass" in my fancy dress. But as I have strenuous and conscientious objections to dying at present, no need remains to discuss the question of "Widders" with dear Mollie.



"By gum, they all blew up and sent us flying!"

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THE COMING OF SANTA CLAUS

I'll tell you all about the way
That Santa Claus last year
Came to our house. I'm sure you'll say
You're very s'prised to hear.

Well, Kris'mus Eve we went to bed,
Dear little Geoff an' me,
We didn't go to sleep, we said
We'd stay awake, an' see

If Santa Claus would really come
Just like the pictures showed,
An' fill our stockin's up with some
Of all his splendid load.

Nurse left us just a tiny light
What burnt inside a glass,
An' course, we'd hung our stockin's right
Where he was sure to pass.

Our eyes WOULD keep on shuttin', though
We propped 'em open wide
With fingers an' with thumbs, you know,
I wonder if you've tried?

There came a creakin' sound at last
Like someone at the door,
We shut our eyes so tight an' fast,
An' made believe to snore.

An' then close by our bed we heard,
A rustlin' noise—we dare
Not move, or speak a single word
Lest Santa should be there—

Till suddenly right on my knee
A dreffful SOMETHING plumped;
You should have seen how Geoff an' me
Woke up, an' how we jumped.

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Geoff screamed, he says I screamed
as well,
But not, of course, with fear,
Though it was startlin', you can tell,
At first, an' then—Oh, dear!

Who DO you think it was that sat,
An' calmly licked her paws?
Why, poor old PUSS! Now, wasn't
that
A funny SANTA CLAWS?

Well, after that, we said we'd try
An' watch by turns all night;
An' next we knew, the sun was high,
An' there, to our delight,

Our stockin's hung, from top to toe
So full, you'd hardly b'lieve—
An' that's how Santa Claus, you know,
Came here on Christmas Eve!

MARY FARRAH.

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THE MANAGEMENT OF WIVES

An Article for all Men About to Marry.

By Lilian Bell.

It is seldom that women will admit that wives are managed, but once in a while truth, like murder, will out.

It is far pleasanter for us women to turn our thoughts to the way we manage men, both as sweethearts and as husbands, than to pause in our mad career when we find ourselves doing things we don't want to do, and in a way we hate, and wonder why we are doing them. If we are honest, we will be obliged to admit, when we do so, that there is a man at the bottom of it every time. And, of course, it is the man we are in love with. And sometimes it means a husband.

In popular fiction, proverbs, and cartoons, husbands are pictured as stupid animals, blind, perverse, born to be managed by some woman, and *always* devoid of tact. Who ever heard the phrase, "As tactful as the proverbial husband?" And who ever heard anybody say, "As clever as a husband?"

But the pathetic and absurd truth of the matter is that when a husband is clever he is twice as clever as his wife, for when he is managing her the most she hugs herself in the fond belief that she is managing him, and that he is at the best a stupid old dear, fit for nothing else than to be piloted along whatever path she chooses.

In matrimony, a clever man is one that gets his own way without his wife's knowledge. If he discovers that mere flattery will cause her to ask him which he prefers, asparagus with the meat, or as a separate course, when hitherto she has persisted in having it the latter way, despite his pleading, why, he would be not a fool, but a wise man, if he flattered her. If, however, she suspects that his compliments are manufactured for this express object, then he must try some other plan.

However, very few men are clever enough to know this. Were it so, every woman I know would have her neck under the yoke.

Another thing that the tactful husband does is to let his wife cry. I don't mean that he drives her to crying, or that he lets her weep while he stands unsympathetically by with his hands in his trousers pockets, his feet apart, and grinning sardonically. I mean that when an emotional woman needs a good cry, he realises that it will relieve the tension. He does not get up and rage, and kick chairs out of the way, and say, "Oh, for Heaven's sake, stop crying, or you'll drive me mad!"

No! He goes and pats her shoulder soothingly, and says:

"There, little woman! I'm sorry the cook has left, and your new costume fits so badly. But cheer up! Let's go out and have a jolly little dinner, and to-morrow I'll write that tailor such a letter that will make his hair curl!"

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Then she looks up through her tears and thinks how handsome, and big, and strong, and glorious he is; and before the dinner is over she has thought of two ways in which to economise, and so pay for the extravagance of his orders to the waiter. For his purse is not elastic, and she knows it.

That is not the end, either. For days, yes, for weeks afterwards, that wife will remember how comforting her husband was when her heart was so racked that she didn't care whether she lived or died. Her soul will expand with gratitude until she will begin to pity every woman she knows because their husbands are so very inferior, and not worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as hers.

If a man sees that by flattering his wife he receives more attention, he would be a fool not to flatter her.

Now, when a woman compares her husband with those of other women in that spirit, it is not difficult to imagine that she will invent some way in which to show him what she thinks of him, for gratitude is an objective virtue, and demands deeds to prove its being. And when her heart is in that softened state, the first thought which occurs to her is the subject of their last dispute. How could she have held out against such an angel of kindness as Jack? Selfish creature that she is! Well, thank goodness! it is not yet too late to give in now, and as soon as he comes home she will tell him so.

Does that husband manage his wife?

A man should not stand, grinning sardonically, when——

The clever man—and by that I mean, in this connection, the tactful man—is one without nerves; or if he possesses them, he has them under control. He is not a fussy man. He may be as particular as you please. He may be a perfect old maid in the way he takes care of his clothes. He may be so much of an epicure that the dinner is spoiled for him if there is no sauce with the fish. It may be that he cannot eat bacon for his breakfast if the cook has not trimmed it carefully before frying. Nevertheless, his temper and his nerves are under control, and he remedies these things without displaying anger or infuriating his wife. There are many quiet and insinuating methods of getting one's own way. It isn't always best to rip up the carpet, and break the furniture, and kick the cat.

I heard of one amusing incident which bacon reminds me of. An extravagant man had married a thrifty, nay, a stingy, wife. Added to this she was inclined to be a little selfish and forgetful of her husband's taste, and habitually allowed the bacon to come on the table with enough rind on it to make it taste. He complained several times, but to no purpose. His wife always patronised the least expensive shops, where delicacies were not even kept.

At about the sixth lapse of wife and cook combined, he went to an expensive butcher and ordered four dozen rashers of bacon already sliced and trimmed.

The price of it nearly sent his wife into hysterics. She saw half her week's profit out of the market money disappear at one fell swoop. So she took it back, and when the butcher obligingly refunded the money, she went into her kitchen and had a serious talk with her cook, which not only settled the bacon question once and for ever, but even improved the coffee and lightened the rolls.

Of course, this is only an example of tact in an individual case. Thousands of women, who do not receive a weekly allowance from their husbands, could not be reached in that way; but this man was clever enough to master the governing motives of his wife's character, and to touch her where she was most susceptible to a reminder.

However, for general practice, and without reference to special cases, the man who manages his wife most successfully is the one who keeps his wife always good tempered,

——his wife is crying, in his opinion quite unnecessarily: he should comfort her.

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When a man's wife prefers social amusement on her holiday to a quiet time in the country, it is the husband's positive duty to accede to her wishes.

happy, and contented. The happy woman is most often the grateful woman. Of course, there are many instances of happiness making women selfish and callous, just as there are numerous cases of the neglected unhappy wife that still hopes to win her husband back by courtesy and unselfishness. It seldom works, however. And I have further observed that the most utterly selfish wives generally have the most indulgent husbands. It is an exasperating sight, and almost puts a premium on selfishness.

On the other hand it is some comfort to know that the happiest marriages are those where wife and husband strive to see which can be the most unselfish, which can give the most to the other. It is a fine art—the art of living together. Nor does it demand from each one that they should be wholly unselfish. The rarest pleasure comes in occasionally accepting a real sacrifice from the other; accepting it graciously, frankly, generously, and with wholesome appreciation of its worth.

Sometimes to accept such a sacrifice is an absolute necessity to the recipient's happiness.

If a husband, fond of a day's fishing, is married to a society wife, who would be wretched at a farm-house near the trout streams, while he could obtain not a little amusement at the golf links, it is his positive duty to substitute a minor for a major amusement, and take his wife to a resort where she can show her clothes. Women who love silk linings seldom can find any companionship in trees and wild flowers. The tactful husband humours his wife, for he knows that in her gratitude she will allow him to join a stag party and to go fishing at some other time, while she very willingly stays at home with the children. Oh, it pays to humour a woman!

There is, however, a type of woman of whom I would hesitate to speak if I did not believe she is often misunderstood and mistaken for another type. That is the contrary woman—the woman of small mind. The woman who wants to do a thing just because someone has told her she must not. The woman who thinks it is clever to do as she pleases, no matter who objects, under the mistaken idea that she is thus showing her independence. That woman is seldom managed by her husband, because he is too angry at her, most of the time, to take the obviously easy method of getting his own way. With this style of woman I have no patience. I agree with her husband—I won't bother with anyone so fitful.

But the other type of woman—the emotional, highly-strung woman, the very feminine woman, the woman of the whimsical imagination, the woman of the eager interest in things—she it is who, from pure femininity appears to be the contrary animal that we women are always pictured. Possibly she is contrary, if to go against tradition, or to be original is to be contrary. Perhaps she does change her mind a dozen times a week, and disbelieve to-day what she averred yesterday. Possibly the mysterious and the forbidden do appeal to her imagination. Therein lies her charm. Woman's infinite variety should never be mistaken for woman's stubborn mulishness.

Yet Englishmen make good husbands to even little fools. They live peaceably with even contrary women, and love them—ay, and even honour them! Certainly they respect them far beyond their worth and indulge them far beyond their deserts.

To live quietly with a quarrelsome woman—a woman who is filled with the conviction that she was born to command, to dominate all, her husband foremost—to manage that woman, that is what the Englishman can do, is doing in thousands of humble homes to-day. He lives with one: ill, fretful, complaining, and never lets her know that she is not as lovely as when he first met and loved her. His heroism is undreamed of by his neighbours, and least of all realised by himself.

But there they are—the unnamed, unhonoured heroes of the eternally commonplace.

To live quietly with a quarrelsome woman . . . is what the Englishman can do.

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THE PROFESSIONAL GUEST

The Last Experience of Sir Forrester Harvey in the Capacity of a Paid Guest. He now Undertakes the Duties of a Match Breaker, but himself Falls a Victim to the Heroine.

By Allen Upward.

VII.—THE HAND OF THE HEIRESS.

I now come to what was, as far as I was concerned, the most interesting of all my experiences in the character of a Professional Guest, though, for reasons which I hope the reader will understand and allow for, I am obliged to relate it with a little reserve.

The secretary of the Agency, through whose medium I had secured all my positions during my career as a Paid Guest, invited me to call upon her one morning to consider a proposal of a very unusual and delicate character. On my reaching the office she explained matters thus:

"There is a family named Rising living at an out-of-the-way place in Lincolnshire, called Bishop's Pickerel. They are a widowed mother, and one daughter named Isabel. The father made a fortune out of chemical dyes, I understand, and divided it by his will between his wife and daughter, so that the daughter, who is just coming of age, will have over one hundred thousand pounds, besides as much more when her mother dies.

"Now, the mother has brought her up with the idea of her ultimately marrying the son and heir of the principal landowner in the neighbourhood, an excellent match in every way. Both the families have looked on it as a settled thing. The young people seemed attached, and everything was going well, when a man suddenly arrived on the scene who has upset the whole plan.

"He calls himself Captain Spencer, and gives out that he held a commission in some Rhodesian mounted corps during the South African war; but he has no proper credentials. No one at the War Office knows anything about him, and, in short, he appears to be an adventurer.

"He came down and took a hunting-box of some kind close to the Risings' place a few months ago, and scraped acquaintance with them and one or two other families in the neighbourhood. Now he seems to have completely fascinated Miss Rising. They meet nearly every day, she will hear nothing against him, and, in short, her mother is afraid the girl will be drawn into a marriage with this man as soon as she comes of age.

"Poor young Carlton, who was to have been the lucky man, has been completely thrown into the shade by this dashing stranger, and now Mrs. Rising thinks that the only chance to save her daughter from a man whom she regards as a fortune-hunter is for someone like yourself to come on the scene, and cut him out."

I gazed at the secretary in some alarm.

"But I don't understand!" I exclaimed. "Surely it is not expected that I should

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engage myself to marry a young lady I have never seen!"

"O dear no!" the secretary hastened to explain. "Quite the contrary. Mrs. Rising wants someone who will bind himself beforehand *not* to marry her daughter, but to retire in favour of the local candidate."

I drew myself up.

"I am afraid I must decline the engagement," I said stiffly. "It does not sound at all the kind of thing I should care to be mixed up in. What right have I to go down and try to win the affections of a young girl whom I have no intention of marrying? You had better advise Mrs. Rising to take her daughter abroad."

"She says Captain Spencer would follow them. And I think she fears letting her daughter meet anyone who might outshine Mr. Carlton."

I could scarcely forbear smiling.

"Mr. Carlton seems to have made a stronger impression on his future mother-in-law than on his sweetheart. But, however, I must absolutely decline to play such a part."

I went home, not expecting to hear anything more of the matter. To my surprise I received a letter two days afterwards from Mrs. Rising herself.

"Dear Sir (she wrote),— I quite understand and respect the delicacy you feel about coming down here. But I think the agency may not have put the situation before you in the best light. My daughter and Mr. Carlton have been practically engaged for years, and I am sure that I could trust to your honour to respect my wishes with regard to such an arrangement. The unfortunate impression made on Isabel by Captain Spencer is a mere fancy, due to her never having met anyone outside our own quiet circle, and I am sure it would soon be dispelled if she had an opportunity of contrasting him with a gentleman like yourself. I am in great distress, and should gladly pay £1000 to see this entanglement broken off, and my daughter saved from lifelong misery. Excuse the appeal of a mother, and believe me, with the greatest respect,

"Yours very truly,

"MARIAN RISING."

This letter made me think I might have been over hasty in refusing, and the sum offered was certainly large enough to tempt a man in my financial circumstances.

I consulted an old friend of my father, General B——, and, on his advice, decided that I might accept the engagement.

The next thing was to arrange my appearance in the neighbourhood so as not to arouse Miss Rising's suspicions. It was decided that I should go and stay with young Carlton, whose father had recently died, leaving him in possession of the family mansion and estates. The old lover could hardly be suspected of wishing to bring another rival on the scene.

I found Carlton a very good specimen of the young country squire, good-natured and steady-going—evidently the kind of suitor to attract the favour of a match-making parent rather than that of a romantic girl. He said very little about the errand on which I had come, and I fancied that he was a more or less passive instrument in Mrs. Rising's hands.

The day after my arrival he drove me over to Bishop's Pickerel, and I was introduced to the widow. I found her a bright, bustling dame, not so far advanced on the wrong side of forty as not to have plenty of attractions of her own for a wooer, fortune-hunting or otherwise.

She received me with a gushing welcome, under cover of which, I was uneasily aware, she took stock of my appearance and deportment, no doubt calculating my chances of outshining Captain Spencer in her daughter's eyes.

The result seemed to be fairly satisfactory, for she at once proceeded in the most businesslike way to fill me up with information about Miss Rising, her tastes, habits, and inclinations, appealing occasionally for confirmation to the prospective son-in-law, who showed a good deal of confusion, as he might, in his embarrassing position.

I listened, feeling a more cordial dislike for Miss Rising every moment, when the sitting was mercifully interrupted by that young person herself, who burst in upon us through an open French window, leading on to a verandah.

Prejudiced as I was against her, I could not deny to Isabel Rising the possession of good looks. In fact, if the circumstances had been different, it is just possible that I might have found her attractive.

As she stood in the frame of the window, holding on to her head a straw hat the size of a sunshade, while the wind and light rippled through her hair, and her lips parted in a mischievous smile, I will confess that for the moment I disliked her rather less than I expected.

Miss Rising stepped into the room and saw her suitor.

"You here, Harry!" she exclaimed in a tone of good-natured indifference.

Then as she caught sight of me she stopped abruptly, a bright blush springing to her cheeks.

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Carlton managed to get on his legs and pronounce our names with some indistinctness.

"A friend of Harry's is a friend of mine," Miss Rising said easily, as she advanced and favoured me with a small white hand. "We are like brother and sister, as I daresay Harry has told you."

I saw Mrs. Rising turn purple under this thrust, though Harry received it with stolid resignation.

"The man who makes a sister of you, Miss Rising, must be very fortunate—or very stupid," I retorted, entering into my part.

She blushed, laughed, and then blushed again, turning her eyes away after a hasty glance into mine.

"Captain Spencer is coming to lunch," she announced to her mother. "I didn't know there would be other visitors."

"I daresay Sir Forrester Harvey won't mind meeting Captain Spencer," Mrs. Rising said acidly. "This is a man who has just taken a small house near here," she pursued, turning to me. "We know nothing about him, but perhaps you may be able to tell us something."

"What is his regiment?" I asked.

"The Rhodesian Horse," Isabel Rising put in quickly, looking annoyed at the turn the conversation was taking.

"Oh, then, in that case I am afraid I should not be likely to have heard of him," I answered with assumed carelessness.

I saw already that Mrs. Rising was taking the wrong course with her daughter, and that if I lent myself to any attacks on my rival's character, I should alienate the young lady at the outset.

To Mrs. Rising's evident annoyance I therefore refused to be drawn into any disparagement of the absent man; and I was rewarded by an increasing friendliness on the part of Isabel.

Captain Spencer was announced shortly afterwards. He was evidently a man of some breeding, who had knocked about the world a good deal, and probably seen the seamy side of it. Although I could imagine his dashing approaches must have been a refreshing change after young Carlton's rather placid style of courtship, it seemed to me incredible that he could have made any really deep impression on a girl like Isabel Rising.

His features were coarse and hard, his sandy hair was getting noticeably scarce, his

As she stood in the frame of the window, holding on to her head a straw hat the size of a sunshade . . . her lips parted in a mischievous smile.

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clothes were in loud taste, and his whole manner was that of the gentleman sharper.

The moment we were introduced I saw a look in his eye which told me that he suspected I had come on the scene as an enemy, and that he had reason to feel alarmed.

Mrs. Rising, in her tactless way, tried to bring us into collision at the luncheon table.

"I wonder if you and Captain Spencer have any mutual friends, Sir Forrester?" she threw out.

Spencer immediately bristled up like an animal about to be attacked.

"It is quite possible, though, of course, not very probable," I returned, meaning to be merciful.

Unfortunately Spencer took my remark in an unfriendly sense.

"I don't know in what circles Sir Forrester Harvey has moved," he said rudely, "but I have plenty of friends in society and on the turf, who, I should think, would be esteemed worthy of his acquaintance."

"I beg your pardon," I said sharply. "I understood you had distinguished yourself in South Africa, where I have never been? If you will tell me the names of any persons in English society with whom you are intimate, I will at once say whether I know them?"

Thus cornered, the Captain (if he were one) stammered and hesitated, and finally muttered that he had misunderstood me.

I was glad to see that this little exchange had not damaged me in the eyes of Miss Rising, who, I thought, looked from one to the other of us as if she considered Spencer to blame.

As soon as luncheon was over I took Mrs. Rising apart and remonstrated with her.

"If you expect me to help you against this man," I told her, "you must let me go to work in my own way. The more you attack him, the more Miss Rising will be drawn to him, if only out of a spirit of opposition. If I appear as his enemy at this stage, I shall simply set her against me, and lose all chance of winning her confidence. Leave us alone and, if I am not much mistaken, your daughter will gradually cool towards him of her own accord."

During the next few days I had further opportunities of studying the situation. Every day either Carlton drove me over to the Risings', or they came across to our place, and Spencer was generally of the party.

Captain Spencer's manner towards Isabel showed something of the confidence of an accepted lover, nevertheless I formed the opinion that her mother had taken an exaggerated view of Isabel's attachment to the Captain.

Whether that were so or not, she certainly showed no disinclination towards a mild flirtation with myself.

My tactics were, of course, to ignore any supposed understanding between the other two, or to play up to my assumed *rôle* of an admirer. But though I laid myself out to do this, it went so much against the grain that I was myself conscious of something forced in my manner towards Miss Rising.

Possibly she detected the insincerity of my attentions, and was piqued into trying to convert me from a sham wooer into a real one.

At all events she did not discourage me, but on the contrary led me on, particularly when Spencer was not present.

On one occasion, when we happened to be by ourselves, she deliberately gave me an opening.

She had been questioning me a little closely about the extent of my acquaintance with Mr. Carlton, and seemed rather pleased than otherwise when I confessed that we had known each other a very short time.

"I have known him for years," Miss Rising observed. "We were boy and girl together. The worst of it is that there are always silly people who expect that kind of thing to end in an engagement. Don't you agree with me that it is quite the other way about?"

I glanced at her, unable to conceal my surprise at this plain speaking, as I responded:

"I must do Carlton the justice to say that he has never asserted any formal claim on you, though it is evident that he would be very glad to be in a position to do so. But your mother, it seems to me——"

Miss Rising shook her head impatiently as she interrupted:

"I don't know what is the matter with my mother, unless she wants to get rid of me. She is always assigning me to imaginary husbands. First it was Mr. Carlton, and now——"

She broke off short, and cast down her eyes as though afraid to commit herself further.

"I don't think your mother wishes to get rid of you to anybody else," I ventured to say gently.

Isabel stole a glance at me.

"Do you mind telling me, Sir Forrester,

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what is your frank opinion of Captain Spencer?"

"Do you mean as an acquaintance, or as a possible husband?" I returned lightly.

To my dismay the girl drew herself back with a sharp catch in her breath, and then, before I could apologise for my levity, she sprang to her feet and left me.

From that moment Miss Rising's manner towards me underwent a change. In the presence of others, particularly of Spencer, she continued to receive my hypocritical attentions with apparent pleasure, but she avoided being left alone with me, and when circumstances did throw us together with no one else by she kept me at arm's length.

These occasions were fairly numerous, thanks to Mrs. Rising, who was always contriving elaborate schemes for the defeat of Spencer, which usually involved the pairing off of herself with Carlton, and Isabel with me, Spencer being artfully excluded from the party.

These manœuvres at last led to the decisive scene.

We four had driven off one morning, on an impromptu picnic, the object being, of course, to prevent Spencer's having a chance of joining the excursion. We lunched very pleasantly in the ruins of an abbey or castle, or one of those places which our ancestors have thoughtfully provided for the use of picnic parties, and after lunch Isabel and I found ourselves alone in a corner of the ruin.

Carried away by the romantic influences of the spot, I found myself playing my assumed *rôle* a little more earnestly than was my wont. Isabel has since told me, indeed, that I quite made her fancy I cared for her on this particular afternoon.

I had just settled her comfortably with the aid of a rug and some cushions, when I heard her give a startled cry. I looked round hastily and saw Captain Spencer, striding towards us.

Isabel made a hasty motion as if to rise.

"What is the matter?" I said to her calmly.

"Captain Spencer!" she faltered.

"What of him?" I returned with some disdain.

Before she could speak again the Captain was upon us. His face was pale, and it was evident that he was labouring under strong excitement. I lifted my hat as he came up, but he did not return the civility.

"Isabel!" he burst out as soon as he was standing in front of her. "What does this mean?"

"Excuse me, Captain Spencer," I put in, speaking mildly and with a slight effort, "but this young lady is under my care for the moment, and I think you forgot to salute her in the usual way."

He turned and gave me a fierce scowl. Then he renewed his attack on Miss Rising.

"I told you I would not have it. You have no right to treat me in this way."

"I mean"—I ventured to interpose again—"that you have not yet taken off your hat to Miss Rising. I believe you have been introduced?"

He flashed a look at me as though he would have liked to strike me.

"Tell this fellow what our relations are," he said to Isabel in the tone of a master.

"Tell me if you are bored by Captain Spencer's exhibition," I threw in.

The girl looked from one to the other of us in evident distress.

"I don't know what you want—what you expect me to say," she murmured to Spencer.

"I expect you," he answered, "to tell Sir Forrester Harvey that you have promised to be my wife."

In spite of my resolve to keep cool, I could not suppress a movement of anger. It will be understood that I did not dislike Isabel sufficiently to make me wish to see her married to the ill-tempered brute in front of us.

"Promised!" she cried in real or affected indignation.

"Led me to believe, if you like that better," he sneered.

"All this seems to me quite irrelevant to the main question," I put in with quiet persistence. "I fail to see why the hope you entertain of marrying this lady should make you forgetful of the rules of courtesy. You have not taken off your hat."

Isabel addressed herself to me.

"You are a gentleman, Sir Forrester, and a man of honour. I want you to know the whole truth. When Captain Spencer came here I was supposed to be going to marry Harry Carlton. There had never been any formal engagement between us, but my mother had always treated it as a settled thing, and he had seemed to take it for granted in the same way, and so between them I was drifting into a false position, from which I found it very difficult to escape. What I wanted was some opening to declare myself plainly, and they would not give me

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one. Well, when Captain Spencer came, it gave me the opportunity, or I thought so. He paid me some attentions, and I accepted them, simply by way of asserting my independence, and showing Harry and my mother that I did not consider myself bound. I may have gone farther than I meant, and led Captain Spencer to think that I had more regard for him than I really had; but I had no intention to deceive him. My mother was always attacking him, and I took his part, and that may have helped to make me more friendly than I should have been otherwise. When you came here——"

"Ha!" Spencer showed his teeth in a snarl.

"When you came here I treated you in just the same way. I soon saw, of course, that you were only amusing yourself by flirting to pass the time, and that there was nothing serious in it. But Captain Spencer chose to be jealous, and to complain to me, and in fact to behave as though he had some right to control my conduct."

"Right!" the man burst in furiously. "Do you deny that you would have married me if this fellow, with his airs and his title, hadn't arrived on the scene?"

I glanced at the infuriated man with cool contempt.

"My title, such as it is, is at least a genuine one, to which I can prove my right, *Captain* Spencer," I retorted with pointed emphasis.

He clenched his fists.

"Answer me, girl," he shouted at Miss Rising.

"Tell me what you think, Sir Forrester?" she implored me.

"I think this gentleman really must take off his hat," I responded gravely. And rising to my feet, I took one step towards the ruffian, and sent his hat flying through the air.

I will do Spencer (if that were his name) the justice to say that, though a bully, he was not a physical coward. He stood up to me like a man, and Isabel has since asserted to me that she thought for the first minute or two I was going to get the worst of it. She will not admit, however, that in that case she would have married the conqueror.

For my part I was never in much doubt. Spencer was a powerful man, at least a stone better than myself, but he was not in such good training, and, what was more important, he had evidently given no study to the noble art of self-defence.

After one or two fierce rushes and some rather wild blows, very few of which landed where he meant them to land, I got him well in hand, and proceeded to administer a severe and scientific thrashing.

My object was to punish him as much as possible before knocking him out. I went carefully all over him, closed up his eyes one after the other, tapped what is known in scientific circles as his "claret," extracted a few front teeth, and finally let out from the shoulder and stretched him on the grass, gasping like a newly-caught fish.

"Whenever you feel disposed to renew this afternoon's amusement, you have only to treat Miss Rising with discourtesy," I said to him. "And please to understand that it will make no sort of difference to me whether you are engaged, or married, or a widower."

I gave Isabel my arm to lead her away. As soon as we were fairly out of reach she became a little silly, pretended to think I was hurt, and insisted on treating what was for me a healthy form of recreation as if it had been some heroic deed.

As I was really not very presentable, I made an excuse to get away before the other two rejoined us. I went back by myself to young Carlton's place, and busied myself in packing up.

Carlton turned up an hour or two afterwards. After expressing himself very generously about the trifling service I had rendered to Miss Rising, he noticed the preparations I had been making.

"You're not going?"

"I think there is nothing now to detain me," I said. "I believe the object of my visit is accomplished. I don't think Mrs. Rising need be under any further apprehension as to her daughter's marrying that man."

"She ought to be grateful to you for ever, and I know she will be," he said earnestly. "We all owe you more than I can say. As far as Spencer is concerned, Isabel's mother is quite relieved of any fear in that direction."

"Well, I suppose the next thing will be for me to congratulate you?"

I was conscious of not speaking with any very great heartiness. The fact is that Carlton's courtship, if such it could be called, had been so lukewarm that I found it difficult to believe his heart was in the affair.

He now hung his head, and stammered out a few confused syllables.

"Excuse me if I have been indiscreet," I said in as light a tone as I could assume. "But I shan't feel strictly entitled to my fee till all is happily settled."

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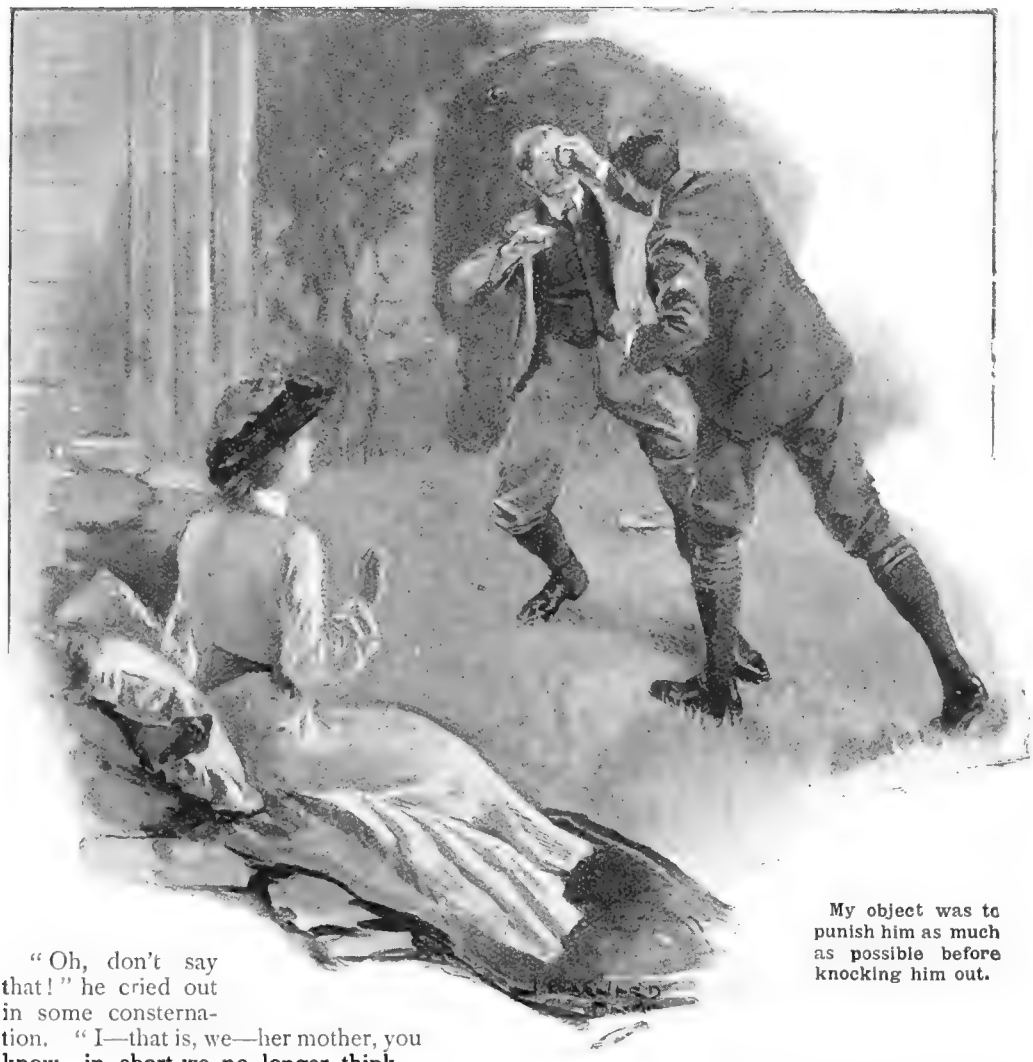

My object was to punish him as much as possible before knocking him out.

"Oh, don't say that!" he cried out in some consternation. "I—that is, we—her mother, you know—in short we no longer think—I no longer wish—Well, to come out with it, *we* are going to make a match of it instead."

"You?"

"Mrs. Rising—Marian and I came to an understanding this afternoon."

As soon as I grasped what had happened, and that the mother had replaced the daughter, I congratulated him again, a little more warmly this time, perhaps.

Then I returned to my packing.

After dinner, to my surprise, Carlton ordered the dogcart, saying that he had promised to go over to Bishop's Pickerel and report how I was. I declined an invitation to accompany him.

He came back rather late, with a grave face.

"I hope you are not obliged to go by an early train to-morrow," he said. "Mrs. —Marian is very anxious to thank you before you leave."

"I intended going by the 10.12," I answered. "I would much rather be excused receiving any thanks."

He said no more that night. At breakfast, next morning, Mrs. Rising was announced. She had driven over by herself to say good-bye to me, and I could not do less than go into the library where she was waiting to see me.

Her manner was also grave.

"I suppose there is no chance of your

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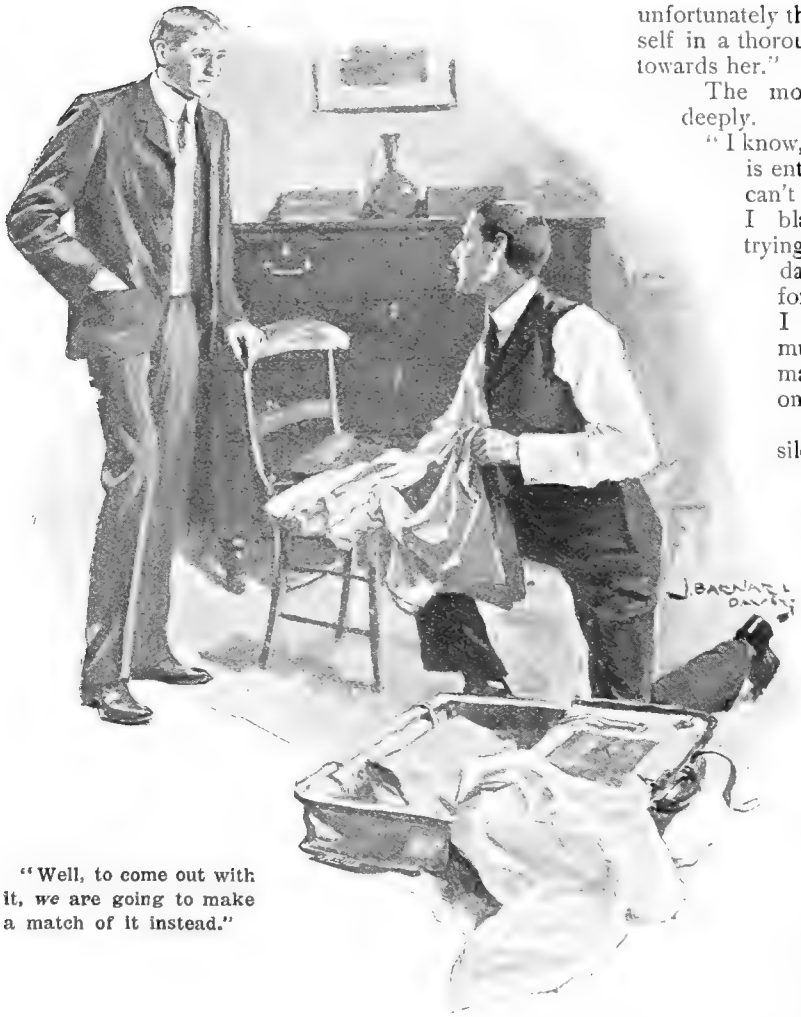

"Well, to come out with it, we are going to make a match of it instead."

reconsidering your decision to leave us?" she threw out, after exhausting the vocabulary of thanks.

"I am afraid not."

"We shall all of us miss you very much."

I bowed.

"Perhaps you may be willing to come down again, at some future time as a friend."

I shrugged my shoulders.

"I know my daughter will be particularly pleased to see you again."

In spite of myself I grew irritated.

"Mrs. Rising, don't you think this episode had better end here? I have come down under conditions about which I will say nothing more. I have paid attentions to Miss Rising which have been, to some extent, encouraged, and the result has been unfortunately that I now find myself in a thoroughly false position towards her."

The mother then sighed deeply.

"I know, Sir Forrester. It is entirely my fault. I can't tell you how much I blame myself. In trying to save my daughter from one form of unhappiness I am afraid, very much afraid, that I may have brought on her another."

I sat perfectly silent.

"You have made a great impression on Isabel, Sir Forrester."

"You hired me to," I said bitterly.

"I fear she will not get over it very easily."

"Woman, woman!" I cried fiercely, "what do you mean?"

"Don't you think, Sir Forrester — you must pardon a mother's anxiety — don't you think that perhaps if you came here again on a different footing, and saw more of Isabel, you might in time come to feel differently towards her? She is generally considered an attractive girl, and what I desire most in the world is to see her happily married."

I gasped.

"Mrs. Rising, are you blind? I have loved Isabel from the moment I first set eyes on her."

I have never seen a woman so surprised in my life. (Isabel pretends that she was surprised too, but I don't believe her.)

Well, now that things had taken such an unexpected and satisfactory turn, I very naturally let the 10.12 train go off without me.

Needless to say, I have not since had occasion to resume the part of Professional Guest.

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CAP AND BELLS

THE TUG-OF-WAR.

See, six aside, strong arms, strong thighs—
The rope between them loosely lies·

|||||||————|||||||

And now, behold, the strain each feels;
They bend their backs and plant their heels:

(((((((————)))))))

Hurrah, hurrah! the right side's stronger,
The others can't hold out much longer:

)))))))————(((((((

I told you so, their grip they miss,
And fall down flat, a row like this:

————————————|||||||

* * * * *

THE FRUIT OF EXPERIENCE.

MRS. SPENDERS: "I wonder what will be the popular styles in bonnets this spring?"

MR. SPENDERS: "My dear, women's bonnets will be divided into two styles this spring, as usual: the style you don't like and the style I can't afford."

* * * * *

TONGUE EXERCISE.

A Russian young girl named Navajokszakancs-
zoljivitch,
Who lived in the village of Goloskjcxeoksljljvitch,
Got tired of her name
And to better the same
She married a man named Zhskalychz-and-a-
whole-lot-more-of-the-alphabetovitch.

* * * * *

SHE GOT IT!

"Harry," she said, "I want a hundred pounds."

"But, my dear," he protested, "that's nearly all the cash I have on hand at the present moment, and I had planned to use it to take up a debt."

"Oh, well," she returned carelessly, "if you think the man who holds the I.O.U. can make things any hotter for you than I can, why, go ahead!"

Thus it happened that she got the money.

* * * * *

"THAT ALL!"

MRS. DE FLAT: "Can you show me anything new in folding beds?"

DEALER: "Only this, madam, and it seems to be quite a success. On arising in the morning you touch a spring, and it turns into a washstand and a bath-tub. After your bath you touch another spring and it becomes a dressing case with a French plate mirror. If you breakfast in your room a slight pressure will transform it into an extension table. After breakfast you press three buttons at once and you have an upright piano. That's all it will do, except that when you die it can be changed into a rosewood coffin."

TALKING SHOP.

FIRST TELEPHONE GIRL: "What did Belle say when you told her your engagement was broken?"

SECOND TELEPHONE GIRL: "Oh, she said it only meant another ring off!"

* * * * *

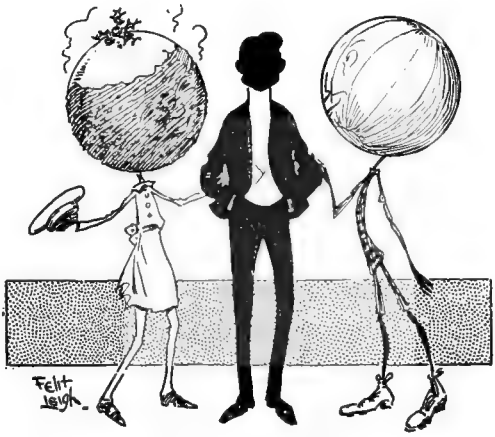
CAUSED A "ROUGH HOUSE."

"Never heard what broke up their friendship? Dear me! I thought everyone had heard that. Brown is engaged, you know."

"Oh, yes; I've heard that. Was White in love with the same girl?"

"No, no. Not at all. But White saw her portrait in Brown's room and asked whose it was. 'It's a picture of my *fiancée*,' said Brown. White examined it critically, and then put it down with the remark that she must be very rich. I don't know what happened after that, but White was taken home in a cab, and neither of them was seen out of doors for a week."

* * * * *



RIVAL SPHERES.

***The Football:* "Meet me on the field in an hour."**

***The Plumpudding:* "Nonsense! he has a previous appointment with me!"**

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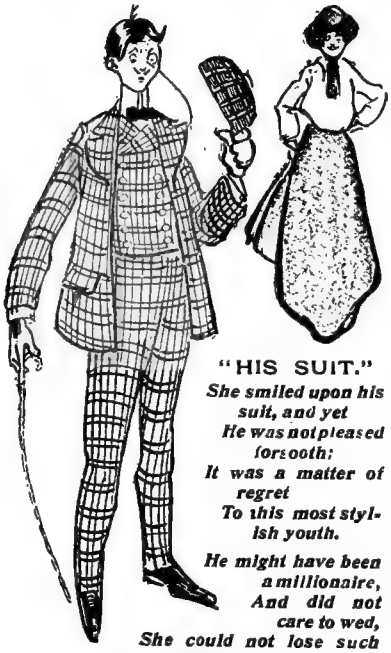


"HIS SUIT."

She smiled upon his suit, and yet
He was not pleased forsooth:
It was a matter of regret
To this most stylish youth.

He might have been a millionaire,
And did not care to wed,
She could not lose such chances rare—
She had a level head.

Although he loved the maiden sly,
His feelings were acute,
He wore a loud plaid—that is why
She smiled upon his suit.

* * * *

SUCCINCT.

The class was having lessons in Natural History, and the teacher asked: "Now, is there any boy here can tell me what a zebra is?"

TOMMY: "Yes, sir, I can."

TEACHER: "Well, Tommy. What is a zebra?"

TOMMY: "Please, sir, a zebra is a donkey with a football suit on."

* * * *

Though "money talks,"
As we've heard tell,
To most of us
It says "Farewell."

* * * *

WASTE LABOUR.

JUDGE: "You are acquitted."

PRISONER (to jury): "Very sorry, gentlemen, to have given you all this trouble for nothing."

* * * *

HE KNEW HIS PARENTS.

TEACHER: "If your father gave your mother three pounds to-day and ten pounds to-morrow, what would she have?"

SMALL BOY: "She'd have a fit."

A SLIGHT ERROR.

"My dear," Mr. Finnicky said to his wife, "I don't think those pills I have been taking have done me much good."

"Why, you haven't been taking any for three weeks."

"Yes, I have; I've swallowed one three times a day as directed."

"You have? Then why is it that there are as many left in the box as there were three weeks ago? What box have you been taking them from?"

"This one—marked for me."

"Dear me, John. That is my shoe-button box!"

* * * *

Some men are born to misfortune. A fellow got a licking the other day for being too familiar with another fellow's *fiancée*, and when he tearfully explained that he had known her for the last thirty-five years, she took a hand in and nearly scalped him.

* * * *

The sky is just as blue to-day
As when I used to meet her
Down in the lane. No bud of May
Was more unspoiled or sweeter.

And she is still as fair, they say—
Would that her heart was truer—
The sky is just as blue to-day,
But I'm a great deal bluer.

* * *

A CANARY-CAT.

"That cat made an awful noise in the back garden last night."

"Yes, father, I suppose that since he he ate the canary he thinks he can sing."

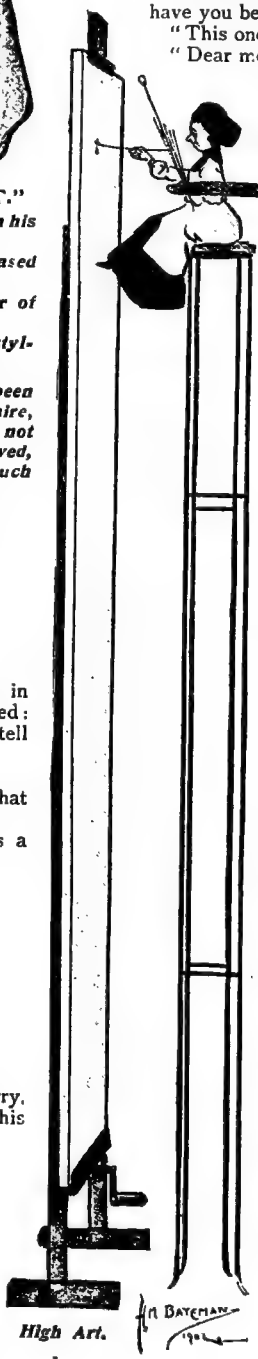
* * * *

TEACHER: "Johnnie, what part of speech is nose?"

JOHNNIE: "'Taint any."

TEACHER: "Ah, but it must be."

JOHNNIE: "Mebbe yourn is because you talk through it, but the only part of speech that I've got is my mouth."



High Art.

"George and the Dragon."

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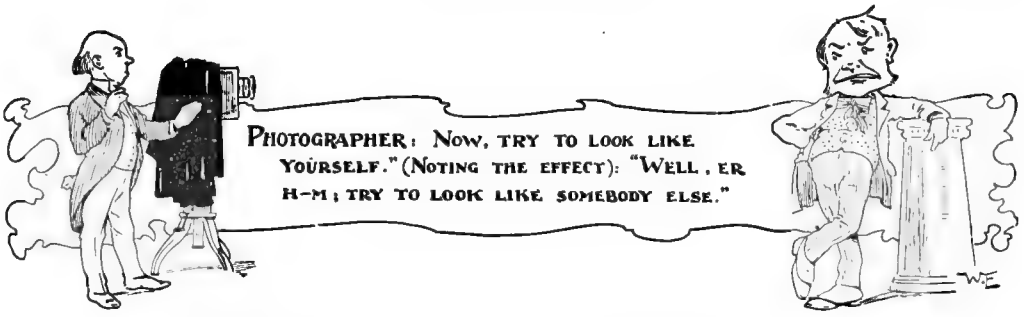


A ROMANCE.

"I hate a tunnel!" the maiden said,
And closer to the traveller drew;
"They always make me feel afraid
Of some disaster; don't they you?"
And then the traveller shook his mane:
"You're safe enough with me," said he;
"Whatever happens to the train,
You always can rely on me."

And, with ear-splitting whistle's shriek,
The train plunged in the black abyss;
The traveller sought her blooming cheek,
And frescoed it with many a kiss.
Emboldened by her sweet alarm,
As on they tore through that eclipse,
He laid her head upon his arm
And kissed again her ruby lips.

"Ah, me!" the lovely maiden smiled,
As she arranged her ruffled hat;
And once again the sunbeams filed
In at the window where we sat.
"Ah, me! for once that horrid pest
Was robbed of every startling fear;
I thank you for your interest.
Excuse me, sir, I get out here!"

And so she left him, drowned in sighs
And on the sea of soft dreams tossed;
Of her sweet lips and deep blue eyes
So quickly gained, so quickly lost.
To dream; but, ah! at last to seek
The time, and find that in the din
She'd seized upon her chance to sneak
His watch and chain and diamond pin!

THE PEDANT GETS A SOAKING.

"It looks like rain."

"I beg your pardon."

"I say it looks like rain."

"What does?"

"The weather."

"The weather, my dear sir, is a condition. Rain is water in the act of falling from the clouds. It is impossible that they should look alike."

"What I meant was that the sky looked like rain."

"Equally impossible. The sky is the blue vault above us—the seeming arch or dome that we mistakenly call the heavens. It does not resemble falling water in the least."

"Well, then, if you are so thunderingly particular, it looks as if it would rain."

"As if what would rain?"

"The weather, of course."

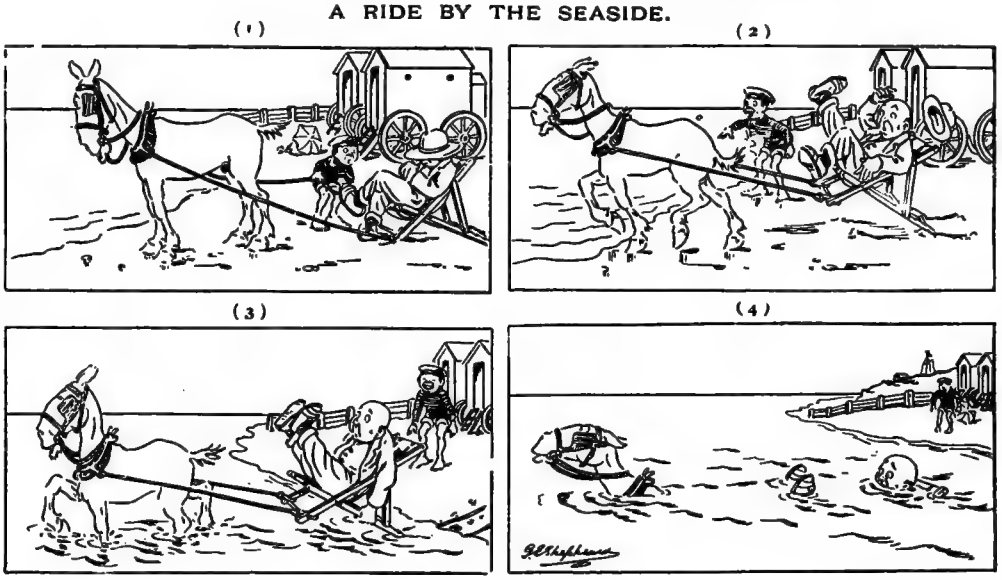
"The weather, as before stated, being a condition, cannot rain."

"The clouds, then, confound you."

"Ah! Here it comes. And I have taken so much time in talking to you that I shall get wet to the skin before I can reach my street car."

"I may not know as much about it as you do, but I've got sense enough to get in out of it, and you haven't," said the other, as he raised his umbrella and walked away in a huff.

A RIDE BY THE SEASIDE.



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A HERO.

JINKS: "When burglars were in your house the other night, did Mrs. Filkins look under the bed for a man?"

FILKINS: "Yes, and found one too."

JENKINS: "One of the burglars?"

FILKINS: "No; me!"

* * *

WHERE THE REAL PULL COMES.

PATIENT: "Well, now, can you give me the gas?"

DOCTOR: "The tooth is out, my dear sir."

PATIENT: "Yes, but it's paying the fee that hurts."

* * *

THAT WRETCHED BOY!

A little boy was coming home with his mother from church, when he heard her saying that the sermon was not worth much. The little boy immediately turned round and said:

"Oh, ma, what could you expect for a half-penny?"

FATTY GOT THE BEST OF IT.

A very thin man was once saying nasty things to a very fat one.

"If I were as fat as you," he said, "I'd go and hang myself."

"In the event of my taking your advice," retorted the fat man, "I'd use you for a rope!"

* * * * *

WAR A LA MODE.

GENERAL (in the near future): "Quick! What news?"

AIDE (breathlessly): "The enemy's pneumatic cycle brigade is attacking our flank."

GENERAL (promptly): "Tell the gunners to load with tacks."

* * *

FEMININE ELECTIONEERING.

"I thought you said you never again would elect her president of your club," he suggested, after she had told him all about the result of the club election.

"Well, we didn't intend to," she replied, "but when she broke down and cried we just couldn't help it."

* * *

BOBBY KNEW A THING OR TWO.

"I think I know why they call idols idols," said Bobbie. "It's because they sit still all the time and do nothing!"

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

THE LIGHTNING ARTIST.

1. ***Preparation.***

2. ***Determination.***

3. ***Desperation.***

4. ***Gratification.***

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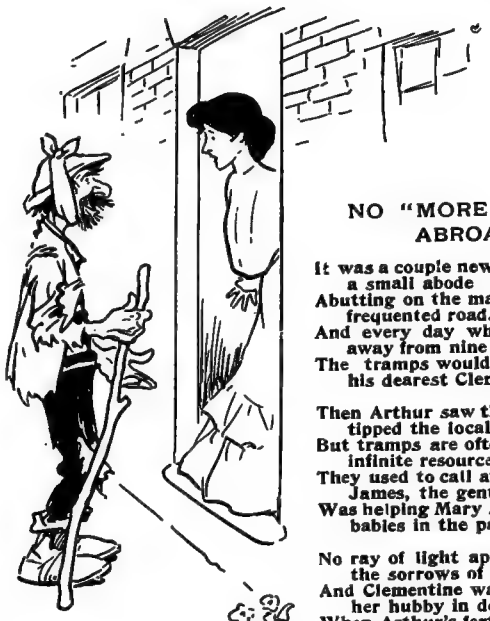
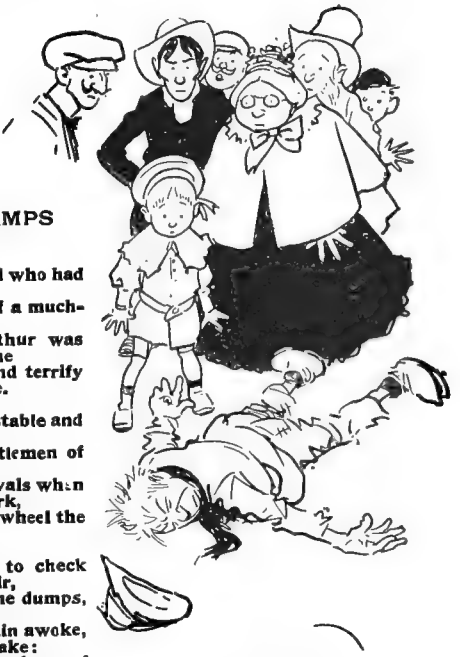




NO "MORE TRAMPS ABROAD."

It was a couple newly-wed who had
a small abode
Abutting on the margin of a much-
frequented road.
And every day when Arthur was
away from nine till nine
The tramps would call and terrify
his dearest Clementine.

Then Arthur saw the constable and
tipped the local force;
But tramps are often gentlemen of
infinite resource.
They used to call at intervals when
James, the gentle spark,
Was helping Mary Ann to wheel the
babies in the park.

No ray of light appeared to check
the sorrows of the pair,
And Clementine was in the dumps,
her hubby in despair;
When Arthur's fertile brain awoke,
and this is how he spake:
"Suppose you give them pieces of
that last sultana cake."

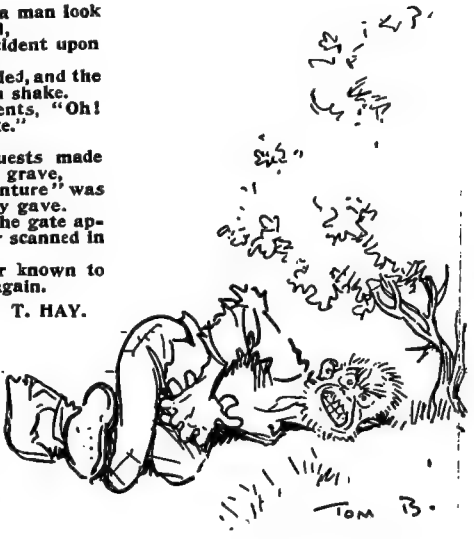
When Arthur strode along at night
and neared the loved abode,
He noticed quite a little crowd col-
lected in the road.
They stood in awful silence round
the body of a tramp;
The doctors said he perished from
acute internal cramp.

And further on he saw a corpse
a-gazing to the sky.
'Twas underneath a currant bush
where he had crawled to die,
But even in extremity his hands
were crossed in woe
Upon a certain part of which it's
not polite to know.

Still further on he saw a man look
round and wildly reel,
As if he stepped by accident upon
some orange peel.
Then Arthur comprehended, and the
knowledge made him shake.
He said in dreadful accents, "Oh!
it's that sultana cake."

The notice of the inquests made
poor Clementine feel grave,
But "Death by Misadventure" was
the verdict that they gave.
Some chalk marks on the gate ap-
peared which Arthur scanned in
vain,
And tramps were never known to
call on Clementine again.

T. HAY.



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CHRISTMAS BOTANY.

Fresh from their dance, they paused awhile
And looked about the room;
The Christmas candles sparkled clear,
White roses breathed perfume.
The walls, all brave with greenery,
Re-echoed Christmas folly.
"Ah," she exclaimed, "of all that grows,
Give me the dear old holly."

A little later, in a nook,
I saw the pair secluded;
Her face was flushed—and looked—well,
As likely once you, too, did.
But what had happened is much more
Than I can swear I know,
I only vouch for what he urged:
"It was the mistletoe."

Once more ere holidays were done
I saw those two, one day;
They walked as if through Paradise,
Each footstep sped their way.
And, lagging at her side, I caught
A voice to hunt dull hours:
"Why, Jack, you stupid boy! of course,
I'll wear those orange flowers."

STRAPPED AT THE START.

It was his wedding day. Radiant in the newest of outfits, he started for the church, accompanied by his best man. But his tight shoes hurt his pet corn, and it looked as if he would have to hobble up the aisle. The best man came to the rescue in escorting him to a neighbouring boot shop, where a larger pair was bought.

When the happy bride and groom knelt at the altar-rails a general titter passed through the assemblage, for on each of the soles of the new boots, turned up to view, was inscribed: "*Reduced to half price.*"

* * * * *

SMOKES AND SMOKES.

GRANGER: "How did he make all his money?"

KIMMINS: "Smoking. He was the greatest smoker in the world."

GRANGER: "Dry up, Kimmins; you can't make money by smoking."

KIMMINS: "He did. He smoked hams."

THE MAGIC PLANT.

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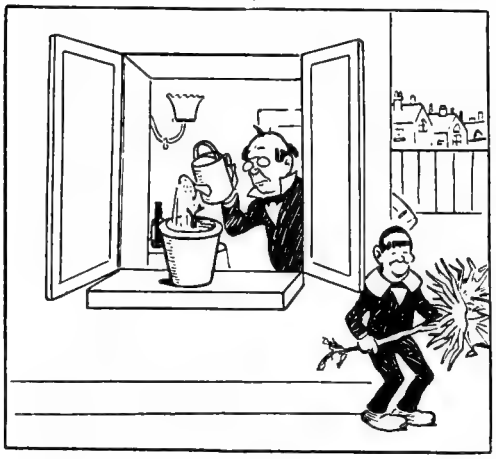

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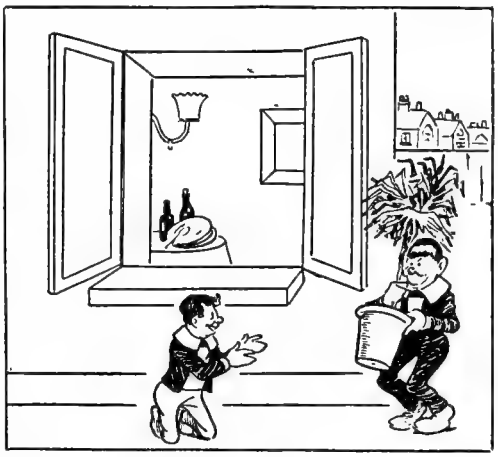

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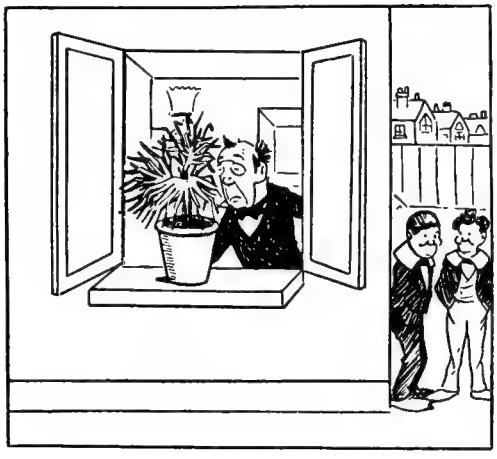

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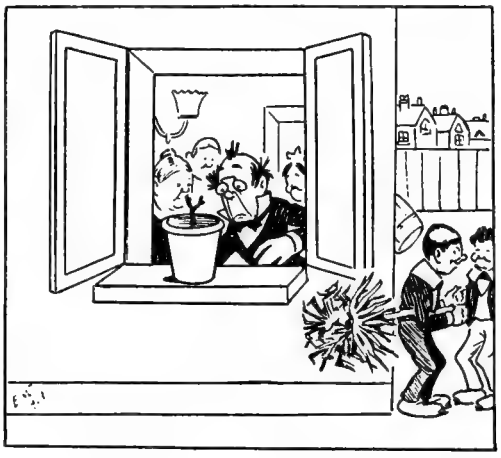

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A NEW USE FOR POLICEMEN.

MRS. D'AVNOO (at front window): "Officer!"

POLICEMAN: "Yes, mum; what's wrong, mum?"

MRS. D'AVNOO: "Nothing's wrong, but I wish you'd step into the kitchen and tell the cook not to burn the meat as she did last night. I'm afraid to."

* * *

THE BLACKSMITH.

When at his glowing 4 G stands
L8 with childish glee,
The children love to see the sparks,
They say, "It 7ly!"

10 A C T of purpose marks
Each heavy, driving blow;
The B10 iron rings again,
And red the embers glow.

Withal, a man of P C is,
His character is fine;
At home his 4 C does not use,
But smiles a smile B9.

* * *

STOCK EXCHANGE ANIMALS.

"Were you a bull or a bear?" asked an acquaintance of a speculator.

"Neither," he replied. "I was an ass."

* * *

There was a young lady of Tenby
Who wrote to a lady friend: "N.B.
Now, don't be misled,
I don't *want* to wed,
But where *can* the eyes of the men be?"

* * *

"HOW THEY LOST HER."

"Why did your cook leave so suddenly?"

"She baked two cakes last Saturday—one for us and one to take to her married sister. When she wasn't looking I exchanged them, and took for our own use the one she had intended to give away."

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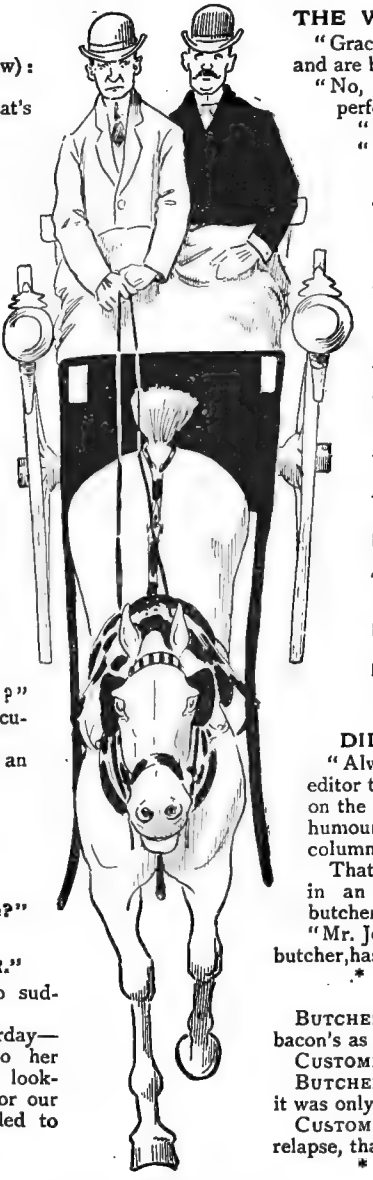


THE WAY OF SOME WOMEN.

"Grace and Minnie have quarrelled, and are both miserable."

"No, they have made friends, and are perfectly happy again."

"How do you know?"

"I saw them crying together."

* * *

THE PARSON AND THE POPPIES.

Upon a girl's bright head that day
A bunch of poppies nodded
While thro' a waste of rustling leaves
Our good old parson plodded.

My ears were on the sermon, but
My eyes were on the bonnet,
While I was idly wond'ring if
The face beneath outshone it.

A most delightful drowsiness
My senses did enthral then;
A pillar of the church, alas!
I toppled to my fall then.

Between the parson's sermon and
The poppies on her bonnet,
The very air was full of sleep,
And I just fell upon it!

But tho' in dreams I saw the face
I'd been in thoughts adoring,
I've hated poppies ever since—
I woke myself a-snoring!

* * * *

DID AS HE WAS TOLD.

"Always," said the astute news editor to the new reporter, "always be on the look out for any little touch of humour that may brighten up the columns."

That evening the new reporter handed in an account of a burglary in a butcher's shop, which commenced: "Mr. Jeremiah Cleaver, the well-known butcher, has been losing flesh rapidly of late."

* * * *

A RELAPSE.

BUTCHER: "I tell you, ma'am, that bacon's as right as you are."

CUSTOMER: "I tell you it's bad."

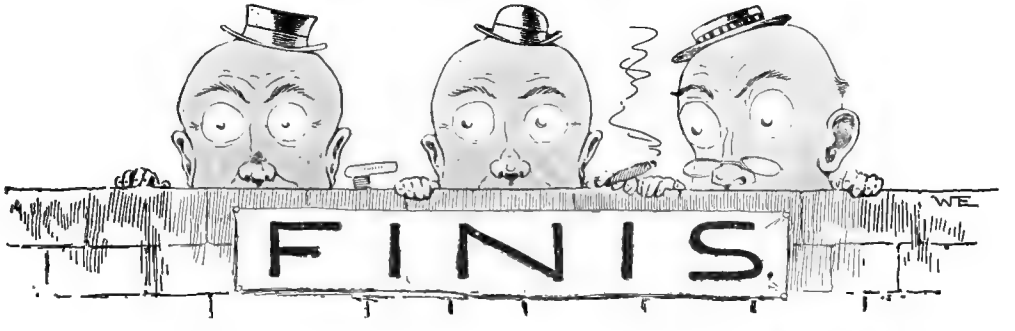
BUTCHER: "How can that be? Why, it was only cured last week."

CUSTOMER: "Then it must have had a relapse, that's all."

* * * *

HE OUGHT TO KNOW.

Giles: "There is a fortune in grand speculation." Miles: "How do you know?"
Giles: "Because I put one there."



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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

SANTA CLAUS on the cover greets you all with open arms, and, indeed, I hope he will treat you with all kindness and generosity this year. This is now the sixth Christmas THE ROYAL has seen, and I feel sure that you will all be pleased to hear that never since its commencement was it in a more flourishing condition. My only hope is that it finds its readers equally so, and that the same ever-increasing prosperity may attend THE ROYAL and its readers (not to say anything of its Editor) for many and many years to come.

SONGS AND MUSIC AT 6d. A TIME!

If "Homeward," the first of the series of sixpenny songs published by this firm, was a success, "Echoes," by Robert Eden, with words by Clifton Bingham, might almost be described as a popular "hit." Among my acquaintances, and they are by no means unlimited, I found both songs on several pianos, and have heard them sung so often that I am quite looking forward for the next to make its appearance. There's nothing like change. "Echoes" owes its success to the fact that it is as melodious as it is easy to play and sing.

"THE DIVER'S POINT OF VIEW."

The author and artist of the weird article on page 146—Walter Wood and Lawson Wood—consider that we should club together for the purpose of presenting them with a medal in recognition of the dangers and discomforts they underwent in providing copy for the Editor and entertainment for the readers of THE ROYAL. It was, of course, absolutely necessary that they should first of all go through the ordeal of diving before they tackled the subject with pen and pencil.

"And I can assure you," said Lawson Wood, "it needed no little pluck to make the plunge after we had been screwed into the unwieldy diver's costume, and weighted fore and aft with huge lumps of solid lead."

But the two heroes went through the ordeal without any particular mishap, though Walter Wood got himself unpleasantly entangled on one occasion and Lawson Wood nearly turned a somersault twenty or thirty feet under the water. After strolling about the sea bottom for over half-an-hour they both returned to the surface somewhat exhausted, but, on the whole, none the worse for their strenuous experiences.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM ABROAD.

A short while ago I published a letter from a little girl in Africa who wrote to give me a description of the many difficulties she overcame in securing a copy of THE ROYAL. Here's a letter from an Australian boy who gets THE ROYAL whenever he can, and was lucky enough to secure the last April number, which contained one of the Baroness Orczy's best mystery stories:

"I was doing a bit of wood cutting in the bush," he writes, "three other men and I, when THE ROYAL came along. I don't think you know what a magazine such as yours means to men who don't sometimes get the sight of a paper for months at a time. And THE ROYAL, in my opinion, is better than many newspapers (tut! tut!—ED. ROYAL). It's quite a job to resist the temptation to chuck work, steal THE ROYAL, and slink away into some quiet nook and enjoy a good long read. But my friends and I made a pact not to read a word till the evening, and then each of us read one of the stories aloud to the others. I had to read "The Old Man in the Corner." I never read a more wonderful story. We all tried to solve the mystery, but none of us succeeded. It's a good thing for criminals the Baroness Orczy isn't a detective."

It tickles my imagination that picture of the four Australians in the depths of the bush reading THE ROYAL aloud by night.

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Vigour to Brain and Body.

"PUTTING SALT ON ITS TAIL."

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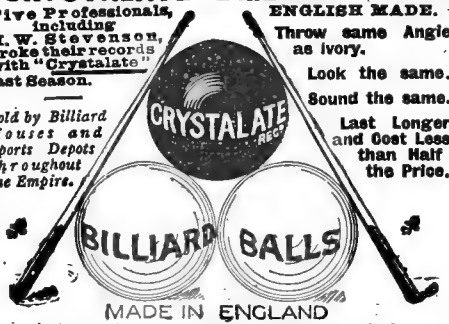

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Mr. Harry Lauder.
Photo, Ward & Downey.

Mrs. Bull's Xmas Party.

THERE was great excitement in the Bull home, and Mr. and Mrs. John Bull, over a quiet cup o' tea, were discussing the home-coming of the boys and girls for the Xmas holidays, and what they would do to provide amusement for the children and the old folks who would make up the party.

"John," says Mrs. Bull, "we must really give the children a good time this year. It is their first Xmas holiday from school, and I should like the girls and boys to feel they are keeping up this merry season in the good old way."

"Well, my dear, I suppose we must take them to the pantomime, and I should like it if we could arrange an evening party when they could invite their little friends."

"Of course, John, we could do so, and have one or two entertainers, such as the Punch and Judy man, the smart Conjurer, and——"

"Yes, my dear, I should very much like that, but things, you know, are very dull in the City, and I really couldn't afford it. Can't we think of something else? O, by the way, I saw Uncle Will to-day. He is leaving town in a few days, and asked me to apologise for not being able to come and see us at Xmas. He told me he had a little surprise for the kiddies, as he is sending something which will be a source of delight to all of us."

"Don't you know what it is, John?"

Mme. Kirkby Lunn.
Photo, Ellis & Walery.

"Well, my dear, he made a lot of mystery about it, but it is something musical, I believe. Anyhow, Will says it is just what we want when the children come home."

Next morning, when Mr. and Mrs. John Bull went down to breakfast, they were hugely delighted to find Uncle Will's Xmas present had arrived. Much curiosity was evinced by both as to what it was.

John, with a smile on his face, amused his wife by saying, "Maria, can you guess what it is?"

"No, my dear, that I can't," Mrs. Bull replied.

"Well, I have an idea; but we had better open it and see."

With considerable excitement John undid the case, and found inside a cleverly-constructed little bit of machinery, the usefulness of which at first sight was not quite clear to them, but the following letter explained matters:—

Hampstead,
Dec. 22nd, '03.

MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,—

Here's the little gift I want you to give to the children, with my best love, and have no doubt they will get very much fun and amusement from it. It is what is called a "Perfecta" Sound Reproducing Instrument, and I think when you hear what beautiful music, songs, etc., it is capable of producing, you will be more than astonished. Enclosed you will find particulars showing you that the machine can be put together very easily, and the wax records in the other box are reproductions of the voices of leading singers of the world, and all you have to do is to fix one of these "Salon" Records

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Signor E. Caruso.

Photo, *Scintto, Genoa.*

Mr. C. Melfort D'Alton.

Photo, *D'Arcy, Dublin.*

Mr. J. C. Doyle.

Photo, *Lafayette, Dublin.*

on the metal cylinder, wind up the machine, and hear the charming result.

With love to the youngsters,

Your very affectionate brother,

WILL.

"It is very thoughtful of Will to send this gift, dear, and here is the difficulty of the children's party quite got over, for with this wonderful machine and records, we shall be able to give them a complete entertainment."

"Yes," says John, with a sigh of relief, "now there will be no more expense for conjurers, pantomimes, and Punch and Judymen, and the children will be equally well pleased."

In the evening Mr. and Mrs. Bull put the machine together, and after a look through the records selected the following as an excellent programme for the children's homecoming :—

SALON PROGRAMME.

Band.....LIGHT CAVALRY
Grenadier Guards.

Song.....ONE SPRING MORNING
Kirkby Lunn.

Violin.....POLONAISE (Wienawski)
Johannes Wolff.

Song.....THE GIRL YOU LOVE
Ada Reeve.

Song.....TAKE A PAIR OF SPARKLING EYES
Ben Davies.

Recitation.....LUCIE
Sarah Bernhardt.

Comic Song.....HEY DONALD
Harry Lauder.

Song.....THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER
(Three Little Maids.)
Hilda Moody.

Duet.....HOME TO OUR MOUNTAINS
(Il Trovatoré, 4th Act.)
Kirkby Lunn and Ben Davies.

Song.....CALLER HERRIN'
Leo Stormont.

Song.....MY LITTLE CANOE
Annie Purcell.

Band.....LES PATINEURS
Municipal Band of Milan.

Song.....LA TOSCA
CARUSO.

Song.....LOVE IS A DREAM
Kirkby Lunn

Air.....TOREADOR (Carmen)
Renaud.

Comic Monologue.....THE BOY AND THE CHEESE
Burt Shepard.

Quartette.....NELLIE GRAY
Meister Glee Singers.

Song.....BLUE BONNETS
Jessie Maclachlan.

Song.....I HAD A FLOWER
C. Melfort D'Alton.

Song.....ANNIE LAURIE
Walter Harvey.

Song.....THE WISE OLD OWL
Vesta Tilley.

Song.....THE SWEETEST GIRL IN DIXIE
("Sergeant Brue")
Olive Morrell.

Xmas Carol.....GOOD KING WENCESLAS
"Perfecta" Trio,
With Orchestral Accompaniment.

GOD SAVE THE KING
Henry Turnpenny.

"Oh, Mother! Isn't it lovely?" broke out little Flossie.

Miss Ada Reeve.

Photo, *Ellis & Walery.*

Miss Vesta Tilley.

Photo, *Ellis & Walery.*

Miss Marie Dainton.

Photo, *Ellis & Walery.*

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"And Dad," said Jim, "I should like to know how it's done."

The other children all clustered round Mr. Bull, each one of them in frantic excitement, wishing to hear it all over again.

"Well, little ones, it is as simple as A B C, and, as a special treat, if you will take partners, you shall all have a dance."

To the children's amazement, the "Perfecta" immediately broke out into the sweet melody of the "Blue Danube" waltz, and for the next few minutes the children danced merrily to the jolly measure.

Then came the tea, the cakes, and the presents; and the children all went home perfectly happy and contented with the beautiful music of the "Perfecta" running in their little heads.

The experience of the Bull family is that of many other happy family circles, and you, dear reader, can enjoy this at very little cost.

Messrs. Pathé Freres, of 14, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C., have succeeded, where others have failed, in bringing out a sound-reproducing instrument, known as the "Perfecta," whereby the nasal twang and hard, brassy sounds which have hitherto characterised this class of instrument have been entirely eliminated, and finality in the art of sound-reproduction has been attained. The success which has characterised this wonderful development in the "Perfecta" has been carried into the Records associated with the name of this firm. By general consent, Messrs. Pathé's productions are recognised as the WORLD'S SWEETEST RECORDS. The most eminent artistes have contributed to this result.

Mr. Ben Davies.

Photo, Biograph Studio.

ENGLISH.

All the foremost English vocalists have contributed to the Pathé programme a selection of their favourite songs. Mr. Ben Davies, England's greatest tenor, has over forty records on their list, and writes: "Your Records are certainly the best I have heard, and so perfect as to tone and purity, that all who listen to them are deeply interested and amazed."

Mr. Watkin Mills has supplied some of his most characteristic songs, as has also Mr. Denham Price, whose records include those charming little songs, "Because" and "The Dawn."

The Meister Glee Singers are represented by a number of their famous part-songs, and Mr. Leo Stormont by many popular and patriotic songs.

Mme. Kirkby Lunn, the eminent contralto of Covent Garden opera, writes of "the marvellous records made of her voice." She has joined Mr. Ben Davies for Pathé reproduction in some charming duets, and has contributed many songs, including "O Peaceful England," "Come Lassies and Lads," and "The Three Fishers."

Miss Ada Reeve, Miss Louie Pounds, Miss Hilda Moody, Miss Marie Dainton, Miss Hilda Trevelyan, Miss Olive Morrell, and Miss Annie Purcell—a bevy of talent—are numbered among the many favourites who have given of their best to the "WORLD'S SWEETEST RECORDS."

The comic part of the Pathé programme is complete, and all the great music-hall stars have contributed, among others: R. G. Knowles, Harry Lauder, Harry Ford, Tom Costello, Malcolm Scott, Charles Coborn, George Bastow, Neil Kenyon, Burt Shepard; also Miss Vesta Tilley, Miss Marie Lloyd, Miss Kate Carney, Happy Fanny Fields, &c., &c.

SCOTTISH.

By general consent, Mr. Andrew Black, the eminent baritone, is first favourite, and there are few musical festivals at which he has not a part. His oratorio and other selections are great successes among Messrs. Pathé's Records. Other well-known Scottish vocalists who have a large following among the lovers of good music are Mr. Walter Harvey and Mr. Walter Lewis, whose rendering of the "auld sangs" (as reproduced by the Pathé methods) are very fine indeed.

Miss Jessie Maclachlan, Scotland's Prima Donna, who is an immense favourite at home as well as in Canada and Australia, has contributed to the Pathé collection her most popular Gaelic songs, as well as others, including "The Scottish Blue Bells," "Auld Robin Gray," "Will ye no come back again?" Mme. Kirkby Lunn's list of songs includes among others the following: "Ye

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Banks and Braes," "My Heart is Sair," "Caller Herrin'." Miss Mary Garden, a favourite singer of Scotch songs, contributes "Comin' Thro' the Rye," "Annie Laurie," etc., etc.

Mr. Harry Lauder, one of the most amusing comedians of the day, says "the public are sure to appreciate the glorious results of the Pathé Records," which include his greatest successes. Another favourite Scotch comic is Mr. Neil Kenyon, so well known in Glasgow and the North, whose humour is of the broad Scotch order. Mr. Kenyon's Pathé records sell well up North.

Speaking of things Scotch, it may interest the reader to learn that Messrs. Pathé have got over the difficulty of introducing the drones into bagpipe records, and have some excellent Bagpipe Selections on sale.

IRISH.

The songs of the Emerald Isle form no inconsiderable part of a Pathé programme, and few entertainments are complete without the inclusion of some of the treasures of Irish melody. Messrs. Pathé have been singularly successful in their choice of subjects, and as happy in their selection of singers as in the results of reproduction which are sure to charm.

The artistes associated with the Irish section of the WORLD'S SWEETEST RECORDS include Mr. C. Melfort D'Alton, Ireland's tenor—the Ben Davies of Ireland; Mr. J. C. Doyle, the darling of the Irish concert platform; Mr. Denham Price, the eminent baritone, who gives "The Low Back Car," "The Wearing of the Green," "Little Mary Cassidy," &c.; Mr. W. F. Cope, and sweet-voiced Miss Agnes Treacy, whose "Avourneen," "Irish Lullaby," and "The Coulin" are specially fine.

Miss Jessie Maclachlan.

Photo, Johnston & Hoffman.

CONTINENTAL.

The great artistes of the Continental Opera Houses, whose appearances in England are almost exclusively made in London—at Covent Garden Opera House—have permitted Messrs. Pathé to reproduce their marvellous voices, so that the public in provincial and other cities may hear for themselves that of which they read. The records thus obtained may be had in several languages, and the amateur and lover of high-class music will, on hearing those records, be amazed at the truthfulness of reproduction.

The eminent Italian tenor, Signor Enrico Caruso, who has become the great star of the Operatic world, sings faultlessly through the medium of Pathé "Salon" Records. M. Vaguet (of the Opera House, Paris) contributes from Gounod's *Faust* and other Operas; M. Renaud, the renowned baritone, from *Carmen*, *Tannhauser*, etc., etc. M. F. Delmas, of Paris Opera gives his "Church Scene" from *Faust*, M. Lassale (baritone), M. Van Dyck, the great operatic tenor, and M. Herold, one of the successful newcomers at Covent Garden Opera this year, are among those that may be heard by means of Pathé "Salon" Records. Mlle. Mary Boyer, M. Piccaluga, Mlle. Jane Merey, who belong to the famous troupe associated with the Opera Comique, Paris, may also be heard.

To a section of the Pathé programme, which is somewhat unique, are contributions by Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, the elder Coquelin, and Mme. Yvette Guilbert—a wonderful trio.

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The Bands include H.M. Grenadier Guards, the Municipal Band of Milan, and the famous French Band of the Garde Républicaine, which had the honour of playing before King Edward. In instrumental solos Messrs. Pathé

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The eminent soloists who have contributed to the WORLD'S SWEETEST RECORDS include Mr. JOHANNES WOLFF, the celebrated violinist; MR. FERNAND LUQUIN, MR. A. S. PETIT, cornet soloist of the Colonne concerts, and others associated with the Grand Opera House, Paris. Messrs Pathé have also achieved a great triumph in getting COUNTESS X, the mysterious Italian titled lady, to play for them her charming mandoline solos, which all visitors to Venice are familiar with. These additions to the WORLD'S SWEETEST RECORDS are remarkable for their purity of tone.

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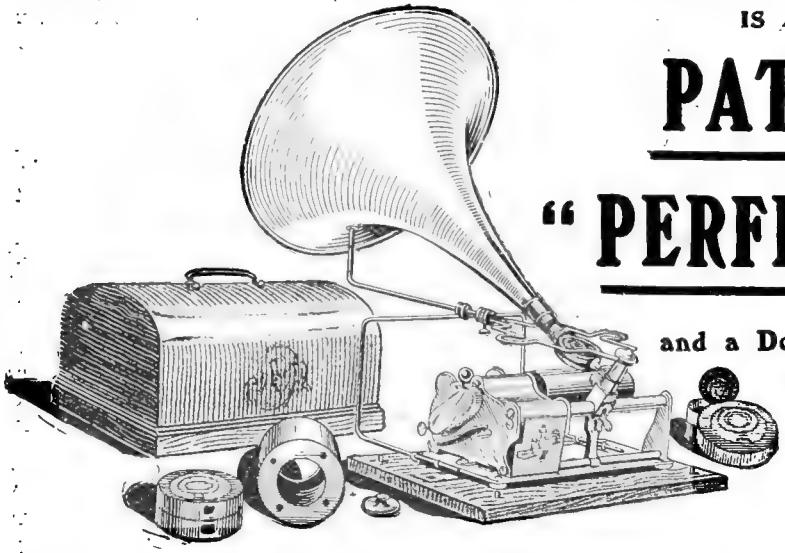

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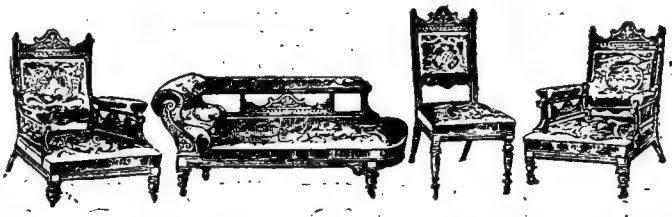

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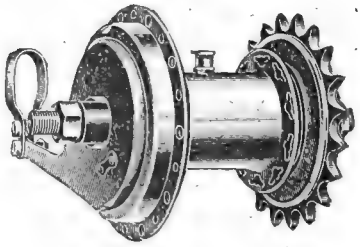

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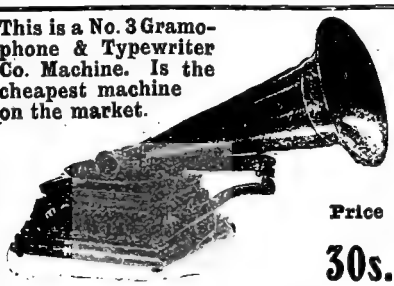

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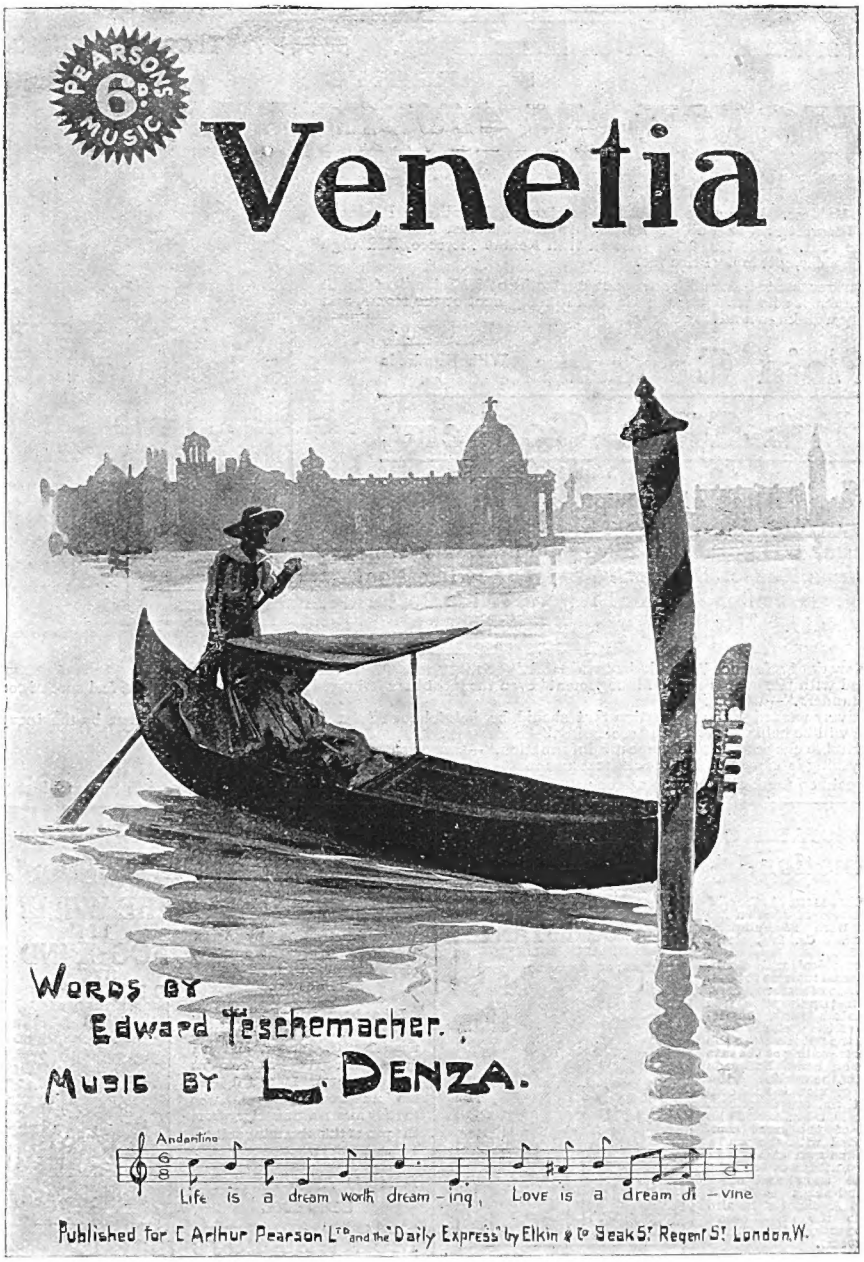
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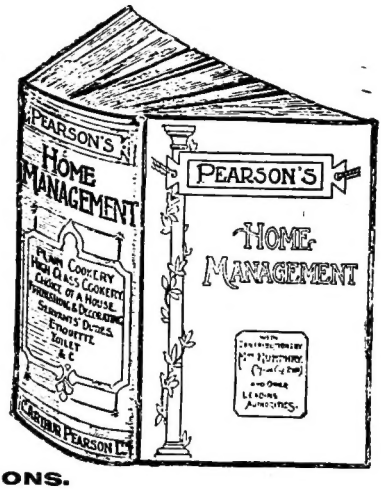

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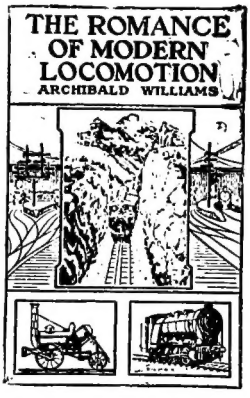

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